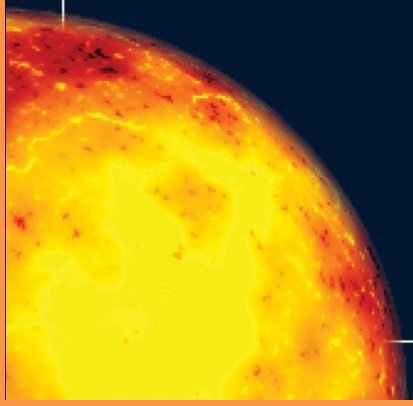
THE QURAN

GOD'S MESSAGE TO MANKIND

New Millennium Exposition
An exegesis for the 21st. Century
with Quindex

English rendition
from the original Arabic by
Paigham Mustafa



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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GOD'S MESSAGE TO MANKIND

New Millennium Exposition
An exegesis for the 21st. Century
English rendition from the original Arabic

You never expected this guidance to come your way,
but this is a mercy from the One who sustains you.
[The Quran: verse 28:86]

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Bismallah-Alrahman-Alraheem
In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

THE QURAN

GOD'S MESSAGE TO MANKIND

This is a declaration for all mankind,
a guidance and an explanation for those
who seek protection from lasting harm.
[Verse 3:138]

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English rendition from the original Arabic by

Paigham Mustafa

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THE QURAN

Good News for the Righteous
And a Warning for the Corrupt
[Verses 6:48; 17:105]

In the creation of the heavens and the earth,
and the alternation of the night and the day,
there are signs for those who possess intelligence.
[The Quran verse 3:190]

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paigham Mustafa has been researching and studying the Quran since 1988 and spent over two years writing, *The Quran: God's message to mankind,* first published in 2016. Mustafa has also written for the National and the Sunday Herald and been interviewed on BBC Radio.

THE QURAN: GOD'S MESSAGE TO MANKIND

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FOREWORD

The two most important days in your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why.
Mark Twain

DISCOVER THE MEANING OF LIFE

Whether you are a muslim or not, the Quran[1] is a compelling read. The Quran is one of the most influential books in the world, and therefore deserves careful consideration. Previously a challenging read, this exposition makes it easy to understand especially for those who are unable to appreciate it in its original language. This is an exposition, not a translation, therefore the phrasing used is to convey the *meaning* of the many-faceted words of the original Arabic. For example, verse 50:43 states "We are the ones who control life and death, to Us is the final return." It is impossible to present in English (or perhaps any other language) the force of the *five-times repeated* 'We' in the one sentence of the original.

This exegesis is a far better rendition than those currently available as it provides added clarity and accuracy; the values and concepts, however, are entirely as originally expounded when the Quran was first revealed. Also the *Quranic thought process,* known as taqlid, that had deteriorated, stagnated and stunted progress has been reconstructed and strengthened on its original foundations.

The Quran outlines that people develop by the measure of their endeavour and that is why it puts human beings at the centre of a moral outlook that is the very fabric of society. Individuals, communities and the world are the focus of its attention to progress and; to lead a prosperous life, it encourages all men and women to develop their Self by facing up to the inevitable challenges of this world. The Quran says that life is continuous and that by developing the Self, the human being makes himself fit, not only for this life but also for the life yet to come. From a modest being he has the potential and opportunity to become an eminent creation ready to take on greater and more rewarding challenges.

To enable this, the Quran provides the means through the Social System it terms as *Deen-Islam*. This is the *optimum* system that offers something no religion, alternative belief or political ideology can ever give.

[1] **The Quran,** often wrongly transliterated as the *Koran*, for muslims, is the revealed word of God. Originally conveyed in Arabic by the *malaika* Gabriel to Muhammad, as God's message to mankind, Muhammad being the last of the messengers and the Quran as the complete and final testament of God.

The Quran draws attention to man's fantastic surroundings. It pushes each person to search, discover and know his world, to harness and manage nature for his own benefit and for the benefit of the world at large. To explore by science and reason is at the heart of all discovery and the Quran inspires man to stretch his mind and imagination.

Championing human rights is a duty, the Quran proclaims. Indeed all who are fit and able are not exempt from striving with their money *and* their lives. Promoting, flourishing and giving life to the natural and human system is an act of great virtue, the Quran stresses, repeatedly.

But a good deed or any act of virtue is of no value if its worth is not realised, that is why the Quran underpins all activity with accountability. And it is this that puts the Quran's Permanent Values and Absolute Laws over and above any other.

The Quran vehemently champions the cause against not only religion, but also the erroneous innovations and banal traditions appended *to* it.

To develop and progress the world needs Permanent Values; the optimum, unchanging principles for changing times. This is exactly what the Quran gives

This book is a first in presenting Islam the *Deen* in such a forthright, refreshing and objective manner. Issues that are usually swept under the carpet are now brought to the forefront, opening up topics often considered undebatable, in a daring, challenging and thought-provoking manner.

PREFACE

The Quran, literally The Recitation, muslims believe was revealed to a man called Muhammad whom God chose as His final messenger. It was revealed in Arabic because the original recipients were Arabs, but the message is for all humankind.

The Quran's claim to divine authorship, God's word verbatim, is unique and it presents scientific facts such as sexuality (pairs) in plant life that was later discovered in circa 1790 and one has just to read it to discover that it contains some perceptive information firmly based on scientific facts confirmed by discoveries and research over past few centuries. The intrinsic structure, complete with self-reference, makes it inimitable and unique.

The Quran challenges those who doubt it's authenticity and divine authorship to produce a like-for-like copy; one which like the Quran is without flaws:

> You may wish to disregard some of this guidance that is revealed to you and you may be discouraged by it... However, you (Muhammad) are only a warner, It is God who controls all things. If they say, "He (Muhammad) fabricated this recitation," then tell them, "Produce ten verses like these, fabricated, and invite as witnesses whomever you can, other than God, if you are truthful." [Verses 11:12-13].

If the author of the Quran is telling you how to defeat Him, then He is certain that He is undefeatable. This challenge has yet to be met.

Those who truly believe and implement this message, do so not because of faith or any mystical experience but because they see the value of its profoundness, its intense, insightful and penetrating wisdom. Once the message is *understood*, its power becomes overwhelming.[2]

The Quran describes not only how the world works but how it *should* work.

In the Quran, those who lead a life according to the Permanent Values are described as muslims, generally translated as *submitters to God's will*, but the best description is *those who harmonise with His ordinance*: the Deen-Islam.

Those who accept the message of the Quran will do so because they use, not their sight, but their insight to see the profoundness of this message. This message must be chosen deliberately and of one's own free will. God does not compel you to accept His way as such forced goodness would have no value. The Quran was originally revealed to Muhammad, but now anyone who reads it becomes a witness to this covenant with God.

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[2] **When asked** how they recognise a messenger from God, the believers said that the profound guidance he brought made them believers. See verses and footnotes 7:75; 85:21-22.

INTRODUCTION

What of this life so full of care, yet to make a sacrifice we do not dare,
The truth we have no time to seek, to fight for justice we are too weak,
A poor life this, if before we die, we do not probe to question why.
Paigham Mustafa

Born into a Sunni family, Paigham Mustafa questioned the anomalies that exist between what people believed and practiced to what was actually in the Quran.

In the 1990s a like-minded acquaintance inspired Mustafa to seek answers to the many inconvenient questions. The current state of affairs transpired not only because the translations of the Quran were poor, but also because people did not understand what they were reading, even when they could recite the Quran perfectly from memory. Most people rely, as they have always done, on priests, clerics and religious 'scholars' to provide the interpretations. This reliance is misplaced, as leaders and the imams, in their zeal to control people, have created many religions and sects with differing doctrines and rituals - which are all alien to the true Deen-Islam.

Mustafa decided he must find out the truth for himself. To his great surprise he discovered some amazing realities that were hidden from the general view.

The stimulus for this rendition of the Quran came from the 1930s publication *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* by Dr. Muhammad Iqbal, the philosopher of the East who was knighted in 1922 by King George. Like all great men, Iqbal was a thinker and his ideas were exceptionally advanced for his time. His writings and the writings of his contemporaries were the inspiration for this exposition of the Quran.

The compiling of this edition first started in 1991 based on the research of many Quran readers. These people were not all necessarily great philosophers as was Iqbal, but in their own way they contributed their findings to ensure that this rendition is the most thorough to date. The people who helped complete this work sacrificed a great deal to enable this achievement to take place. For that, Mustafa is eternally grateful. This is the work of many great hands and, to borrow and paraphrase a quote from Sir Isaac Newton, Mustafa can genuinely say that he has “seen further and clearer, because [he] stood on the shoulders of giants”.

This book does not present anything new. It's not a reconstruction of Islam - which can only be defined by God, who does so in the Quran: this is

the reconstruction of thinking *and* Islam. This is *ijtihad:* the endeavours of independent thinking, the door to which most Muslims have closed because of their reliance on interpretations encapsulated in the 9th century and have surrendered their right of independent reflection to their 'scholars' - who have their own self-serving political motives.

The Quran says that *muslims* are knowledgeable, forward thinking *and tolerant*, but the traditional Muslims and their imams condemn and persecute those who differ from their fossilised interpretation and seek a better understanding.

This is just one reason why it is important to understand the true meaning of the Quran. Those individuals that do, will become *muslims* with the power of true knowledge to support them and the ability to answer many challenging and difficult questions.

If the word ‘Islam’ conjures up a medieval image frequently projected by some of the media, and in no small way substantiated by many sections of the self-appointed 'guardians of faith', then prepare yourself to be enlightened.

THE PROLOGUE

Do not read to contradict and refute,
but to weigh and consider.

LOST IN TRANSLATION

In my formative years I tried to read the Quran in English but without much success. The obstacle for me was the language. It wasn't my English that gave me trouble, but the style in which it was written. I had a Marmaduke Pickthall translation with archaic words and grammar that became an insurmountable barrier to my enjoyment and understanding of this wonderful book.

I now know that although translators like Pickthall tried to emulate the Quran's original style and rhythm, they missed the point. The Quran is a book of guidance and for it to be of any practical use, the reader must be able to *understand* it, otherwise it loses its function.

Of course, for many the Quran remains a *holy* book reserved for *recitation* in prayer and at weddings, funerals and other social occasions. Some insist that no attempt should be made to understand the Quran in the mistaken belief that the words of the Quran each have varied and hidden meanings and that they cannot be understood without a scholar's interpretation - which should be accepted without question. This unquestioning view does not rest well with those who have *understood* the Quran and recognise the many grave anomalies in the translated texts, that have led to many assorted and disturbing beliefs.

The Quran states that it is a book that makes things clear, explained without ambiguity. It further boldly states that had it been from any other than God, it would have contained many discrepancies. Surely this means that there is consistency in the message - consistency that can only be achieved by dependable rules of the language. If the translator changes the rules at will, then where is the reliability?[3]

Words translated with different *shades* of meaning to suit the context of the statement, can be accepted without any hesitation. But when the meaning appears to create ambiguity or confusion, it is then we have to question, not the author, but the translator's skill or indeed the motive.

Unlike some languages, Arabic is not a concept language. The words in Arabic are based on *root* letters. Words that stem from one root may have different *shades* of meanings but the *essence* will remain the same.

An example of this is the root S'L'M. One word that comes from this root is I<u>SL</u>A<u>M</u>. This means submission (i.e. harmonisation) to a set of laws. This could also mean a group of elements subject to fixed laws, e.g. atoms, planets etc. This can also be applied to a set of harmonious values by which

[3] **Detailed guidance:** 6:114; 16:89; 17:89. Clear guidance: 2.99; 2:185; 6:157; 7:56; 12:1; 14:4. Nothing left out: 6:38. No contradiction: 4:82.

a community - people, birds, and insects - live. The word to describe such a community is MUSLIM – also formed from the root S'L'M. In fact, anything or anyone that submits to an absolute law, rule or value (creating or maintaining harmony) can be said to be *muslim*, in English a 'submitter'.

This one example shows that although the two words (islam and muslim) appear quite different, one describes a physical system or a social order (submission) and the second describes the one that submits to it, i.e. submitter: planets, people, animals etc. within that system or order. Should we take another word with the same root, yet give it a meaning that is different in essence, then we know the translator has made a fundamental error.

This basic rule applies to all the key words in the Quran - same root, same essence - throughout the Quranic vocabulary. Likewise, the word *quran,* root Q'R and its derivatives *qiraat*, *qari* and *iqra* are all anchored to the same base and have the same substance, although they each carry a different meaning without changing the essence of the root connotation: *recitation, reciter, recital* and *recite,* respectively. Languages that don't apply this feature with any consistency can be called *Concept Languages* as random words may be applied to objects and ideas without any connection to other similar associated words.

While some analogies can be made, to compare the Quranic grammar and structure to just any other language is to degrade it. The Quran needs to be incisive and perfect in its delivery of God's message. Anything less would make it unfit for purpose. Some may still argue that the beauty of the Quranic language is in these variations of meanings. However, this is only a belief and carries no validity. These people have been indoctrinated to leave the thinking to 'scholars', who have their own self-serving agendas.

There are many weaknesses in the traditional translations largely due to the desire to conform to prevalent beliefs. Failure to comply with accepted dogma could of course mean being ostracised, or worse, being declared an apostate with the fatal consequences it can bring. This alone ensures that little or no change takes place. However, a constructively critical eye needs to be cast over any translation. These can then either be discredited and discarded or validated and accepted.

To attach arbitrary meanings leaves the Quran open to abuse and is in fact an insult to God. Did He in his infinite wisdom create a message of guidance for all time, yet leave it open to ambiguity? I suspect not.

Paigham Mustafa, *February 2006.*

RELIGION AND ISLAM

What is the difference?

It is possible that mankind is on the threshold of a golden age;
but, if so, it will be necessary first to slay the dragon that
guards the door, and this dragon is religion.
Bertrand Russell

Religion, whether theistic or non-theistic, is a subjective experience shaped by the susceptibilities and prejudices of individuals and is mainly a personal reflection. A traditional religious life is occupied with rites and rituals with varying aims to attain salvation, liberation from sin and rescue from evil through a saviour or by appeasing a chosen deity, prayer, pilgrimages, miracles, austerities, self-mortification, penance and mercy being the main routes to a heaven. Entry to this paradise is available only to those belonging to the particular fold and all others are excluded and sent to hell, a place of torture to pay for their life of sin.

Any ordered way of living is a *Deen* – this includes all social and political systems and everyone lives by a system of some description. Deen-Islam is the holistic socio-economic system that encompasses everything and operates according to the ordinance of God; it is in essence the System of God. Firmly based on the Absolute Laws and Permanent Values as enshrined in the Quran these laws and values are the foundations upon which the human Self is able to develop in order to attain its optimum potential. Implementing these laws and values of Deen-Islam results in positive outcomes not only for the individual but also has meaning for society as a whole. What moves life forward is action through good deeds underpinned by accountability. It is this, and only this, that raises the measure of human endeavour. The Quran outlines the principle values in verse 2:2-3; to safeguard oneself from lasting harm and to become benefactors of humanity. This is further expanded in 2:177 and 17:22-39 detailing the profound values that progress society.

Religion, any religion, is an opiate, designed to subdue and control the masses who resign their intellect to others. However, the Deen-Islam is a stimulant that invigorates individuals into positive action and raises the measure of human value, making it fit for this life and the life yet to come. This development can be attained by anyone who aligns his or her beliefs with the Permanent Values found in the Quran, and Quran alone, with ultimate accountability to the One God and to the One God alone.

Unlike religion, the primary function of Islam is the development of the human personality, not through rites and rituals but by active participation in society underpinned by useful good conduct. It helps the transformation of an individual's character by organising it into a harmonious system of living. When individuals are good, it is not possible that society is not also

good. The values in the Quran eliminate internal and external conflicts. They have meaning for individuals but have far richer meaning for each person as a member of a larger social group - the global village.

The only way for people to achieve the promised state of peace and security, both here and in the life yet to come, is to break away from all religions, all false teachings, and all fabricated systems that have a stranglehold on humankind. God has assured every man, woman and child an exalted status when they believe and follow His guidance. People are therefore encouraged to return to the only consistent source of this guidance: the Quran. No reasonable person can deny that we need order, and it is Deen-Islam that provides the ultimate social system for *all* humanity.

When intelligent people look at the absurdities and futility of religion, they often reject God, when in reality they should reject religion. It is religion that steals the identity of God and distorts it, while Deen-Islam properly defines God, His System and humanity's position and role within that system.

The purpose of the Quran is to undo and loosen the vicious grip of religion on humanity, and to restore Deen-Islam as an effective code of guidance that God, periodically over time, sent His messengers amongst all communities. This culminated in the final detailed and complete guidance of the Quran. It is the Quran that deconstructs religious thought of all description and replaces it with God's System: Deen-Islam, the dynamic order for social reform. Deen-Islam invigorates people to establish the system designed for all people. Moving into the system of *Deen-Islam*, as given in the Quran, and the Quran alone, replaces fear with security and turmoil with peace.

Islam: a fundamental difference

Islam is not a religion. However, this fundamental difference is something that can be understood only by looking through the unique prism of the Quran. When understood through the Quran only then can Islam be implemented as a socio-economic system, the primary function of which is the development of the human personality. It helps the transformation of an individual's character by organising it into a harmonious system of living. When individuals are good, then unfailingly society is also good. Islam manifests as harmonisation with God's laws. The antonym of Islam is 'zulm', the displacement of anything that harmonises. Deen-Islam is the system that harmonises; brings about peace and security.

Who is a Muslim?

Muslim: the one who harmonises with God's law. There is a distinction between 'muslim', the adjective for an individual who follows the Absolute Laws and

Permanent Values in the Quran and Quran alone, and 'Muslim' with a capital M; a label and a title used by those who profess to follow the Quran but in practice have additional doctrines and rites and rituals not found in the Quran. A person need not be called a *muslim* in order to be one. Any suitable description (i.e. submitter, humanitarian etc.) may be used instead, the key aspect being that they believe and follow guidance in the Quran alone. See verses and footnotes 3: 199; 22:78; 28:53.

A muslim is not a label but a description of a person recognised by the high standards of probity he or she maintains. Conscientious people will recognise in the Quran the core principles which can be defined as the Permanent Values. They may already live by these high standards and have exemplary characteristics even before they find the guidance of the Quran. They may in fact already be *muslims*, those who harmonise with Permanent Values, even though they are described, not as muslims, but by another equally appropriate term. See verse 28:53.

It was not until the 9th. Century C.E. that Islam became a description for a distinct religion and Muslim a separate identity. This was when the corpus of hadith, traditions wrongly attributed to Muhammad really took their lethal grip. Before this all who held Quranic values, Arabs, Jews and other members of the community, were known as 'Believers' and lived together in harmony; ate together and married into each other's families. This is clearly confirmed in the Quran verse 5:5.

Why believe in the Quran?

If a person already has his or her values aligned with the Quran, then why do they need to accept and follow the guidance in the Quran? While it may appear that an individual's values are in agreement with the Quran, it is the Quran alone that consummates the complete Permanent Values and Absolute Laws that harmonise with God's system, and provides them in a framework that a person may not be able to. This ensures that a full and complete calibration of values can take place. The Quran explains that when asked how they knew that God sent a messenger, people said, the profound guidance he brought has made us believers. See verse 7:75.

Why do we need Permanent Values from the Quran and accountability to God?

Collective wisdom is just as fallible as individual wisdom and even democracies cannot be used as a metric for ethics. We should remember that it was not that long ago when slavery was legal, genocide was legal

and apartheid was legal. The world needs an external set of permanent values and absolute laws; unchanging principles for changing times. This is exactly what the Quran gives. Consider the treatment of humanity: for millennia the world's religious, atheist and secular leaders and governments have applied their collective genius to the riddle of statehood. The results have been corruption, secret sex societies, cultic obsession by the elite with child sex, secrecy, aggression, state sponsored homicide and genocide, war, famine, infanticide, slavery, control and exploitation, manipulation and abuse of the masses in a variety of ways so frightening that it defies description. Why bad things happen to good people: see verse 8:25.

ISLAM AND MUSLIMS: AN EVALUATION

They are those who believe in this guidance and lead a life of good works according to it. For them enjoyment and happiness is in this world as well as in the life yet to come. This is God's unchangeable law. Such is the greatest achievement.
[Verse: 10:63-64]

If Islam is true, why then are Muslims in such an abject state?

In the Quran, to those who follow His guidance, God promises peace, security, health, wealth and happiness. Indeed, Muslims are not too shy in telling the world they have the best religion - but do we not witness something that is very different?

The Muslim countries are some of the least developed, the poorest, the most corrupt and the most tyrannised countries in the world.

God promises those who follow His guidance victory and success, yet what we see is that the majority of professed believers are living in failed nations and in dismal poverty. So why this blatant contradiction? Does God not keep his promise? Or is it that the Muslims, while believing they follow the Quran, are in fact not doing so?[4]

All over the world, the professed Muslims are perpetually in a pitiful condition. This is still their predicament, even after the various infusions of fresh thoughts that are occasionally injected to transform their plight. Despite all efforts, they remain intellectually restricted and materially poor. In the last few decades, they have also become more demonised and despised. Their beliefs, culture and general living standards are considered to be backward and medieval. The media is continually shaming them for their actions, branding them terrorists and barbaric people. Indeed, their activities attract and often justify such labels.

This is not exactly the eminence God promises the believers.

Since their actions affect citizens of all countries, the time has now come for muslims, intellectuals and all people who want a better world to critically analyse and evaluate the whole of the 'Islamic' tradition, not only from the last few hundred years, but even the millennia before that. And in this evaluation there must be no place for sentiments or prejudice.

Compared to the secular Europeans and Americans, the professed Muslims in all parts of the world are in total disarray. This is despite the boast that the current figure of more than one and a half billion Muslims are expected to outnumber all the Christians, and the fact that many

[4] **The messenger** confirms that his people have indeed abandoned the Quran. See verse 25:30.

Muslim countries, in terms of natural resources, are amongst the most wealthy nations on earth.

Within 100 years of Muhammad's mission, the muslims rose up from being nomadic camel herders to become one of the greatest civilisations the world has ever seen. What happened to destroy that position of pre-eminence?

Many things we now take for granted were the discoveries of enterprising *muslims*. Amongst many other things, it was the *muslims* who developed the 'modern' numbering system, including algebra. However, it has to be accepted that many of the inventions attributed to Muslims were in fact improvements to previous technologies and not new discoveries or developments. It is true though that these advances were made by *muslims* who were in their day at the forefront of science and technology. During the 16th. and 17th. Century anyone in Europe who wanted to progress their knowledge in sciences such as astronomy, mathematics and medicine learned Arabic. Undoubtedly many ideas for social reform came from the Quran, as European renaissance scholars also studied it during and before this period.[5]

Now, from innovators and leaders, they have become foragers, beggars and stragglers. What happened?

In the Quran, (verse 47:38) God says when people drift from the straight and balanced path, others will replace them. And they will not be like them. Is this what happened to the muslims?

The key message in the Quran is *'not to set up or accept any authority to rank with God*'. This also means not to accept and apply any laws or values that conflict with those given in the Quran, thus accepting authority other than God. To do so is tantamount to high treason and deemed to be an unforgiveable offence.

God promises victory to the believers, and God's promises always come to pass. So why has God forsaken these people for the last thousand years? The answer is probably more obvious than it seems: people have deviated from the ambit of the verse – "*It is Our assurance that We grant victory to the believers who follow this guidance.*" [Verse 30:47]. In other words, victory comes to those sincere believers who apply their minds and hands

[5] **In 12th. century C.E.** Robert of Ketton, a theologian from Lincolnshire, produced one of the earliest translations of the Quran. This Latin translation became the most widely used until the 17th. century. John Greaves, the Savillian Professor of Astronomy at Oxford, also showed interest in matters well outside his scientific discipline. His notebook has excerpts from various chapters of the Quran which he translated into Latin, the scholarly language of the day. The mathematical system we use today also became known in Europe in the twelfth century, when Robert of Chester (often confused with Robert of Ketton) translated the writings of Persian scholar Al-Khwarizmi. Al-Khwarizmi, for whom algorithms are named, is known as the developer of modern algebra.

to forge out a better future and those who disbelieve and do little or nothing will be left in the shadows to despair. This is God's Law of Requital; the self inflicted punishment upon the drifters and rejecters, termed as God's retribution. The Quran inspires people to put beliefs into action through good conduct and God's promises always prove true.[6]

So if people have been ignoring God's guidance, enough to earn His retribution, then what exactly have the Muslims been following since the 200 years after Muhammad's death? What was it that removed *muslims* from the pinnacle of success that they rose to occupy so quickly after Islam's resurgence?

In the last thousand years, people who claimed to be muslims have been in the darkest pits of ignorance, the heights of cruelty and wickedness, especially to their own people. They have also had their lands, their freedom, their cultures and even their beliefs and values taken away from them by mercenary invaders in the guise of traders and priests.

In order to understand this disgrace we must question the prevailing 'Islamic system', current 'Islamic law' and the traditional 'Islamic heritage.'

Besides believing in the Quran, the traditions also require Muslims to believe in doctrines called the 'hadith' and the 'sunnah'. These are the sayings and actions respectively attributed to Muhammad in books compiled around 200 years after his death. Few people realise, however, that the most binding precedents, rituals and laws were originated not by God Almighty, not by Muhammad, but instead by imams such as Bukhari, Tirmidhi and Ibn Maja who assembled the numerous books of the hadith literature.[7]

It is the hadith compiled by these imams that needs to be scrutinised, because after all, is not this hadith the precursor of all 'Islamic' theology and its laws such as the Sharia and Hudud (including stonings, beheadings and the murders of those branded as apostates) that are implemented today?

Similar global calamity encompasses all people around the world, and not only those who go under the 'Muslim' umbrella. There does not exist even one nation in this whole world where people enjoy total freedom, justice and social wellbeing that can be even remotely comparable to the standards that the Quran advocates.

And more sadly, there does not exist even one Muslim country in the world today which has achieved even a semblance of the social justice, equality in law, progress in knowledge, science and technology that has

[6] **Drifter:** a person influenced by opinions outside his own mind. See verse and footnote 15:42.
[7] **The Traditions of Hadith.** See the Quranic Concepts section and verse 68:37.

been achieved by the 'infidel' west. The real truth is that there are many Muslim countries which are the most backward and most repressive countries existing in the world today, that also provide a fertile ground for cruel dictators and corrupt governments.

Muslims still bear the yoke of colonialism of today's superpowers who rule by proxy. While the Indians threw out the British after a difficult but relatively short struggle, the Arabs in North Africa and the Middle East, the Pakistanis and the Bangladeshis in the sub-continent are still in economic bondage and servitude to their masters in the New World Order. Furthermore, 100 million Arabs have yet to free the Palestinian people from only four million in a struggle that continues after more than six decades.[8]

One of the main reasons for these relentless failures of the Muslims is their continuing disunity. Not only are they disunited against a common enemy, but they appear to have a wish to die at the hands of each other – as we see in Lebanon, Palestine, Iran and Iraq and recently Syria.

This disunity is further brought to global attention and attracts much derision when the annual Eid festival, a supposedly uniting event, after Ramadhan is celebrated on conflicting days by different countries, sects and communities, even within the same town, city or village. If the Muslims cannot agree on a relatively simple matter, how can they agree on other more important issues?

Muslims ridicule some Christians for believing in the trinity, yet they have 'gods' by the dozen. Scores of sects and splinter groups each blindly follows their particular saint or imam, authorities whose decrees they accept as equal to the Quran, and by implication equivalent to the commands of God. All this despite the fact the Quran explicitly forbids splitting into sects. The 'gods' are their leaders; the authorities they set up to rank with God, which according to the Quran is shirk: high treason.

These deviant beliefs have led to atrocities of the worst kind; for example: sectarian murders: Shia killing Sunni, and Sunni retaliating likewise. All this aggression causes displacement as well as impoverishment, economic oppression and exploitation. All this disunity and killing is against the Quranic guidance and severely condemned in the Quran as among things that are most wicked.

Is it not the drifting from the Quran, the revealed words of God, into the spurious hadith, the religious concoctions and the innovated rituals of the priestly mullahs, that have cut people off from the grace of God?

[8] **Four million** Zionists against 100 million Arabs? Well not exactly. The four million Zionists have the might of the US military behind them, due to the strength of the Jewish lobby in America. But should *muslims* be overly concerned about this? See verses: 3:13; 4:75-81; 8:26, 39, 64-66; 42:39.

The traditions of the hadith are false, and worse than that, they are wickedly attributed to the good messenger Muhammad, and in many cases smear his honourable character.

For example, in a hadith of Sahih Bukhari (the so-called 'authentic' hadith compiled by Imam Bukhari), the messenger is accused of paedophilia, as he supposedly married Aisha when she was six years old and consummated this marriage when she was nine years old. Some hadith also accuse him of sexual depravity because he had more than one wife.

None of this is true and the Quran clearly emphasises his exemplary character. If the hadiths seek to confirm the messenger's good character, would they be accusing him of paedophilia? Surely not. The Quran only condones marriage between physically and mentally mature adults and neither forbids nor encourages polygamy. Muhammad would never have drifted from Quranic guidance and it must be remembered that he was married to one woman for most of his life. It is only in the latter years, for political alliance, that he married more than one woman.

This is only one hadith, there are volumes more. You only have to read a few and it becomes clear that they are much like the stories in the Bible; a mixture of anecdotes, parables, myths and indecencies. Such narratives are difficult, if not impossible, to defend and no intelligent person would stoop to do so.[9]

Within 200 years of the resurgence of Islam, the muslims went on to become true examples for mankind. The muslims fathered much of the sciences and lent their names to many aspects of philosophy, physics, geometry, chemistry, astronomy, biology and physiology. All this at a time when Europe was in total darkness.

And now after a millennia of ignorance, Muslims recollect the messenger's achievements to be something like a flash in the historical pan. The muslims of the period had prominence and distinction while today's pretenders are barely a shadow of their predecessors, simply because they have deviated from God’s teachings. When it is said that they have deviated, this means that they have corrupted the messenger's original teachings, the guidance entrusted in him by God. They have ignored the Quran and instead glorify the hadith.

[9] The traditions of hadith are much like the stories in the Bible; a mixture of anecdotes, parables, myths and indecencies. There are many web sites - just surf the net and check them.
http://drshabbir.com/library/criminals.pdf
http://skepticsannotatedbible.com/sex/long.html.
http://www.thethinkingatheist.com/page/bible-contradictions
https://asimiqbal2nd.files.wordpress.com/2009/06/contradictions.pdf

Many intellectuals, open-minded but misguided men and women, recognised the failure of the hadith, and without checking, they also deserted the Quran, mistakenly thinking that all the profanity and cruelty in the hadith originated from the Quran. Rejecting the hadith, some despondent individuals went on to explore other equally fallible sources, religions or philosophies and ideologies of secular humanism for their sustenance. And now they too are in the moral wilderness.

Other sincere but naive and trusting people, not finding any rituals in the Quran, or even understanding its focus, found solace in the hadith while keeping away from what they did not understand.

The fabricators put together the hadith that gave them everything they wanted. Now their hadiths shroud the whole Muslim behaviour right from prescribing the 'correct' method of sleeping, washing, bathing, eating, dressing etc. Under the mullah's direction, the Muslims effectively killed off their own intellect. For those imams looking for passive followers, the hadith became a most effective tool to achieve this end.

Among the many myths that also found their way into the hadith is the belief in the Mahdi. The Mahdi is a mystic saviour who is expected to appear towards the last days and will come to save all Muslims from their cruel oppressors; this same kind of saviour that is popular in many religions around the world.

The Quran informs (verse 13:11) us that God does not change the condition of any people, unless they invigorate what is within themselves. God tells people to strive and be pro-active to do good, to endeavour to develop their Self to make it fit for this life and for the life yet to come. All people are commanded to encourage good and to deter evil. This means continuous enterprise in the way of God guided by His laws and values.

Therefore to hang on to hopes of a saviour is actually a subtle attempt to make defeatists and pessimists out of people - the suffocating belief in fate - to make them submissive and to wait for someone else to come along to save them. The truth is that no one will come to help - you must help yourself.

The hadith about the Mahdi props up a passive, pessimistic and submissive community. It is all totally contrary to the Islamic spirit of dynamic endeavour for victory in the name of God and in the way of God. How could the advocating of pessimism and passivity guarantee peace and harmony, unity and justice - let alone success?

Although some hadith were promoted to simplify the tenets of belief, it soon became evident that these structures standing on shaky foundations would collapse. It was obvious that these questionable doctrines were clearly against the principles of the Quran. However, it would later become

all too clear how easily the ruthless foreign rulers who invaded and colonised Muslim lands found it easy to overwhelm a docile and indolent populace that was perfectly moulded into its submissive and servile form through the indoctrination of all these false hadith. This was the cause of the downfall of those who believed they were *muslims*, but in reality were never enriched by the experience of Quranic values. Unfortunately, much the same is true today.

Did the Quran then not pose a serious problem for the hadith advocates? How did the Imams handle this potential threat to their hadith? The answer to this is very simple: they ruled to cut off all intellectual discussion and inquiry into Deen-Islam. They came up with the simple and effective idea that only the Imams, the priestly class, would be allowed to handle all matters of belief – they would teach people to call them the inheritors of the messenger's mission. Despite the fact that Islam never allowed any hereditary monarchy or priesthood, the imams went on to successfully set up not only a priestly class but a whole hierarchy of priests. They imposed this upon the masses and denied them any access to the true understanding of the Quran. Unfortunately, even today, the imams are most successful in plying their trade - religion and charity are after all two of the highest income generators in the world economy. Unfortunately, most of the money never sees the light of day to benefit those who need it most.

The Mullahs also like to refer to a group of venerated men known as ‘four imams’ who have left their mark by instating the concept of *taqlid* - to follow in faith (i.e. blindly) which effectively sealed off all questioning. The taqlid concept still has the traditional Muslims in its stranglehold.

In all their attempts to deceive people and cheat them out of their rights, the standard-bearers of 'religion', the imams and priests, have always relied mainly upon one technique: they attributed their own aims and ambitions as emanating from the 'Will of God.' This is the secret of the strong grip of 'religion' on the minds of the masses. The most effective way of maintaining this hold is to keep people ignorant, to cripple their sense of reasoning and render them incapable of independent thinking. People are indoctrinated into holding up ignorance, stupidity and blind submission as signs of piety and godliness. The leaders of 'religion' would have us believe that the more obscurely and incoherently a person talks, the nearer he is to God, and the more irrational and unscientific he is in his attitude and approach, the greater the esteem in which he should be held.

The only argument advanced in support of 'religion' is that it was followed by their parents and forefathers, which vouchsafes sanctity. If anyone has the temerity to question any religious belief or practice, the leaders of 'religion' try to arouse the ire of the people against him by accusing him of desecration and insult to their renowned ancestors. Fear of

popular wrath has been used quite effectively by the leaders of 'religion' to muzzle their critics and hold them in perpetual awe.

It was to undo and break this vicious grip of *religion,* and to restore *Deen* as an effective Code of Guidance that God sent His messengers with guidance amongst communities from time to time. There will be no more messengers; that is why Muhammad's mission culminated with the final detailed and complete guidance of the Quran, and it is the implementation of the Quran, and the Quran alone that can now deconstruct *religious* thought of all description and replace it with God's System, the Deen-Islam, the dynamic order for social reform.[10]

We have to question everything. God has given us the mind and the intellect to question and to criticise. Of course this means a quick demise of the *taqlid* and also much of the existing doctrines instated by the imams. But is it not the aim to get to the truth?

In Europe, we have been successful because people are free to criticise one another. Now, people everywhere (including *Muslims)* should be able to question and criticise, not for the sake of criticising but for the sake of openly discussing ideas that have in the past been restricted.

It is therefore without any doubt that the people following the imams have been a backward and ignorant community. If ordinary people ever hope to rise again, as all good people must, and be worthy to call themselves *muslims*, they must make the effort to free themselves from all mental bondage and the lies that have been perpetrated by the fabricated hadiths.

Some alternative schools of thought did arise in Egypt and in India which sought to repudiate the hadith. People such as Muhammad Tawfiq Sidgi and Mahmud Abu Rayya, both from Egypt, questioned the acceptability of the hadith. In India the Tolu-e-Islam founded by Ghulam Ahmad Parwez arose during the 1930s to take Muslims back to the Quran. Dr Abdul Wadud, a surgeon in the British Indian Army also wrote many books to promote the Quranic guidance. The intrepid scholar Abdul Hasan Chekannur from Kerala also challenged anyone to show that the Sharia succession law was from the Quran.

Similar movements have sprung up in other societies throughout history and are indeed prevalent and more widespread today, especially with the advance of internet and social media. Criticism of the hadith is therefore not new and has always been in existence.

[10] **People must** leave their own system and enter God's System: the Dīn-Islam as found in the Quran: 8:5; 2:125; 22:26; 33:33. See also verse and footnote 71:28.

The process of the change from having an absolute conviction in God and the Quran to placing a binding (and blinding) faith in the hadith took a long period of time. It did not happen within a few decades, but rather through a slow process stretching from about the ninth century onwards.

There is no basis for the hadith falsely attributed to the messenger as a source of law or even guidance. This does not mean that all hadith are totally and completely redundant, far from it. Hadith that give proper historical information should be accepted and included as part of historical records. However, the guidance for laws and positive values must come from the Quran and Quran alone.

It was the Quranic guidance that within a short 200 years propelled the *muslims* to overtake the greatness and the magnificence of the Roman and Persian empires. Such is the power of the Quran.

At a time when Europe was in a quite abysmal situation, the *muslims* founded an intellectual and material civilisation that served as the model and source of knowledge for the rise of Europe. It was Europe that inherited the mantle from the *muslims*. The knowledge founded by the *muslims* was the spark that ignited Europe. Europe developed further on this borrowed knowledge and built up a leadership in the intellectual arena that perhaps has not been surpassed, even to this day.

The would-be-muslims settled into a complacency that would smother them for centuries to come. People have ignored the source of the past greatness of *muslims* and instead shackled themselves with superstitious and simple ideas. The Quran, an enlightening beacon, has been put aside. So is it any wonder that today, with a hadith of one kind or another in their hands, people are still groping in the dark?

This calamity of following charismatic leaders has always been an affliction that has affected the whole human race. Europe rose after the stranglehold of the medieval church was broken, only to fall again through different waves of secular humanism of many kinds, including Marxism, Liberalism and many other 'isms'.

However, after Europe faltered, it woke up with a vengeance from the suffocating stranglehold of the church. Kant's exhortation to 'dare to ask' helped to sever the church from all ‘worldly’ affairs. There began the distinction between the secular and the spiritual civilisation with unintended consequences. The complete severing of ties with God opened a Pandora’s box of ideologies and humanisms that brought the West to the present day, mired in a plethora of ideologies and philosophies with nothing permanent or true to hold on to. When they should have rejected religion, they rejected God.

The Christian west and the non-Muslim world, despite the wealth and power, still face many serious social, economic, moral and ethical problems. History as well as recent events have shown that in some ways they are no better than their lapsed Muslim counterparts.

History has recorded that the way Europeans treated their conquered people is no shining example of Human Rights: ask the native Americans, the Aborigines in Australia and the Nguni of South Africa. Guantanamo Bay is another example of unjust incarceration and barbaric torture by a supposedly civilised nation.

Closer to home and recently in 2015 there have been many child sex abuse allegations against establishment figures. Those who should be looking after our interests have been accused of depraved acts against the most vulnerable in our society.

Politicians have been regularly found to be involved in fraudulent expense claims, sexual indiscretions and many other unpalatable goings-on. There has been the systematic sexual abuse of hundreds of young girls while in 'care' of social services, and entertainers have been convicted of sexual offences while working in national institutions such as the BBC - all of which were never brought to light when it was all happening. Even major charities and corporations have not been left unscathed. And so the list of corruption and mischief goes on.

All this has taken place because in some cases not only does the status of the criminal appear to override the suffering of the victims, but mainly because the offenders involved did not believe in accountability to themselves or their society - let alone to God.

Many politicians, business operators and other people in power are sincere and have real concern for humanity, but others are devils who disguise themselves as saviours - complicating and obfuscating matters to extract the maximum benefit for themselves and their cronies.

We can thus highlight the inadequacies of a system based on Christian and secular values. But what about those who label themselves as Muslim? Between the bold identity statements of beards and hijabs of the modern and even post-modern Islamists, the common denominator is empty rhetoric, without any proper knowledge or intellectual backing. These Muslims are perhaps in a worse situation than anyone in the west. While claiming to have the Quran - God's guidance - they are unwilling to apply it. Is it any wonder that on the day of accountability the messenger will lament that his people - indeed many people - have deserted the Quran?

It must be emphasised though that while our system in Britain has its flaws, it's not totally rotten, and at least we have many tangible benefits and know where improvement can be made.

The Quran was sent as a mercy for ALL humankind. While many have adorned themselves with material successes, the Muslims have choked themselves with their rituals, the supposed spirituality of the hadith and their assumed fundamentalism.

The example, which Europe copied, was an excellent illustration of a *muslim* people unimpeded by any false teachings. These *muslims* strived hard and achieved great success here on earth which God promised those who followed His guidance: they have also earned their rightful place in the life yet to come.

Sometimes we have to review our position and discard our current beliefs because new information or a better understanding demands a change of perspective, even if this is difficult to do.

Journalist Rageh Omaar in his TV Series, Islam in America, noted that in the Supreme Court in Washington there is a frieze in the chamber where the chief justices actually sit and dispense justice. This frieze pays homage to the ideas and principles that inspired the American legal system: one of the foundation documents represented in this frieze is the Quran. In the nation's capital there are other references to Islam, largely unknown, rarely seen. The Thomas Jefferson building contains the library of Congress, the oldest cultural institution in Washington, completed in the 19th century. Around the dome of the reading room is a mural meant to represent the nations and ideas that contributed most to American civilisation. It may come as a surprise to historians, that amongst the ideas represented here is Islam.

Omaar also spoke to Congressman Keith Ellison who took his Oath of Office on a copy of the Quran originally owned by Thomas Jefferson, one of the founding fathers of America, the principle author of the Declaration of Independence and the third President of the United States.

Thomas Jefferson owned a copy of the Quran, it is said, to understand the North African Muslims who the Americans were fighting against. When he had the opportunity to question a leader of his enemies why this war was being waged against them, he was told: because according to the Quran it was their duty ordained by God to kill all infidels.

However, if Jefferson had understood the Quran he would have soon realised how untrue this was - God never commands any aggression and unjust killing. Whatever the reason for Jefferson owning a copy of the Quran, it would be impossible for an intelligent and sincere person not to be positively influenced by the Quranic message.

While people can and should reject the absurdities of religion, no intelligent person can deny that we need order. Countries are consistently trying to progress by applying common standards of measurement,

common principles of law and universal standards of human rights. We see this increasingly in Europe as well as internationally.

Agnostics and atheists may rightly believe that science explains our surroundings, the world and the universe we live in. Science reveals what things are and how they work, but cannot give any ethics or moral values of how we should use the power that such knowledge invests in us.

To make a just society we need laws and ethics that benefit all mankind and not just those who have the money, power and make the rules. We need Absolute Laws and Permanent Values. The Quran gives absolute standards for the total welfare and progress of mankind, for individuals and societies, without the need for any trial and error. Indeed, these Absolute Laws and Permanent Values from God ensure that each individual has rights and responsibilities. They ensure that each individual receives due benefit and is also ultimately held accountable by God.

Accepting the higher, consistent standards of the Quran raises the status of an individual and gives a solid foundation on which to establish a dependable and strong character. A weak individual with ever-changing values can never develop and progress.

The goal of each individual should be to become fit and ready for the next stage in life; a life yet to come. The Quran provides the blueprint to create such an environment in which each individual can realise his or her potential by replacing lower values with higher values and giving up something that is seemingly good for something that is truly great.

This book with the exposition of the Quran presents Islam: the Deen, not the religion. In changing times, it gives unchanging principles to deal with the *root causes* of the problems that face humankind. The Deen-Islam is for *all* individuals, communities and societies who seek a just and progressive social order. Indeed, it is a message of guidance for ALL humankind.

ARABIC: THE LANGUAGE OF THE QURAN

Looking back into history the intelligent observer will see that the spoken Arabic and Arabic in the Quran have both moved along parallel routes. The Arabic that is spoken today is the result of many changes that have shaped the language. The vernacular we hear today in the Middle East bears little resemblance, not least in structure and vocabulary, to the common Arabic of yesteryear. In the case of spoken Arabic, it transmuted into a *Concept Language,*[11] but there is nothing wrong in this because this is how living languages naturally evolve and develop as they are enriched by other cultures.

However, such a process would be detrimental to a language that seeks to disseminate absolute principles of moral and ethical standards. This is why the Arabic of the Quran has remained static and encapsulated to retain its essential purity. This means that the rules and vocabulary too are extant in their original form. This durability has ensured that the message is received intact and without change. This reliability maintains the Quran's precision and incisiveness. The Quran imparts universal Permanent Values and Absolute Laws so to possess these qualities is crucial. Otherwise it would not be the precise and dependable message that it is.

Is it not strange that it appears easy to understand ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics but not the Quran? In fact, the Arabic of the Quran, which is a very modern scripture by comparison, is much easier to decode than the pictograms of ancient Egypt. When decoding the hieroglyphics there is no supplementary text used to understand it, so why cannot this method be used to understand the Quran as well?

When we do use its own rules and text to understand it, the meaning of Quranic words become consistent resulting in an accurate and clear interpretation. However, using the spurious hadith to explain the Quran has impressed certain misleading meanings for many words and this has made the Quran apparently a difficult and confusing book that it can no longer be seen as the guidance for mankind it is meant to be.

In order to establish the true message of the Quran it is necessary to uncover and use its unchanging system which stands firm on the 'root letters'. It is these that fortify its foundation and validate its veracity.

The root system of the Arabic language is an unfamiliar concept to most people. Even many scholars do not seem to grasp the essential facts of how Arabic words are constructed. This is one of the reasons why the Quran is often poorly translated.

[11] **Concept Language:** see chapter Lost in Translation for description.

All Arabic words are made from a few component letters, commonly called a 'root'. A root usually consists of three letters (sometimes two or four), which define the meanings of all words formed from the root. By adding various vowels (i.e. changing pronunciation) as affixes, associated meanings can be derived. For example, the Arabic letters S'L'M form the root for the following words: ***sa****l****aa****m***: (peace or harmony by conforming and submitting to a law or order), *I****sl****a****m***: harmonise/conform, *mu****sl****i****m***: one who acts in harmony and conforms. In all these words, you will see the root (component letters) is the same, *and in the same order*, i.e. S'L'M.

Arabic words are therefore made by using word elements such as a prefix (insertion before the word), infix (insertion within the word) or suffix (insertion after the word) that are attached to a base, stem, or root. In a root language, words (and their derivatives) mean what they mean because they are built from other words these base words are called roots. Now, while many languages, like English for example, are concept based, there are some words that can be likened to the root system. For example if you learn what the word 'obligation' means, you should have no problem when you hear the word 'obligate' or 'oblige' - you use the root to understand the word built from the root. Also loan words from other languages that are root based can show how this works. If you learn that the Greek root word 'khronos' (In English: chronic) means *time*, you should have no problem when you hear the word 'chronicle' or 'synchronise' - you use the root to understand the word built from the root. Here are some examples:

chronic	lasting a long time - especially of illness.
chronicle	a factual account of important events in the order in which they happened.
chronological	arranged in the order in which events happened - chronological order.
chronometer	a device for measuring time exactly.
chronometry	the science of the accurate measuring of time.
chronostratigraphy	the branch of geology concerned with establishing the age of strata of rocks
anachronism	an error in chronology; setting a person, fashion, object etc. in the wrong period (e.g. a clock striking in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar).
synchronise	to arrange for events to happen at the same time.

The important point to understand here is that the essential meaning does not change. One root can form many different words but the essence of the meaning stays the same. Classical Arabic as used in the Quran, as one of the most primitive Semitic languages, is primarily a root language. Words get their meaning from the roots they are built from rather than by associating a concept with the word, as you would in a concept language. This gives Quranic Arabic a crystal clear aspect to it; there is no ambiguity

or confusion in a classical Arabic sentence. The language is one of clarity, directness, and certainty - qualities that are hard to achieve in other languages. This means that the same word (or derivatives formed from the same root) cannot have different meanings. This essence of the word and its meaning always remains secured to the same root.

Here is an example to illustrate how misunderstandings can occur when the structure of roots is poorly understood:

To gamble means to play games of chance to win money or another specified prize. Are games of chance forbidden in the Quran? The verses of the Quran normally considered to mention gambling are verse 2:219 and verse 5:90. However, the word '*maysiru'* has been wrongly translated to mean gambling. If we, for argument's sake, take the usual understanding that it means gambling then how would we translate the same word which also appears in verse 2:280? The translation of the verse 2:280 then would wrongly become "If the debtor is in difficulty, then wait for a *gambling* (*maysiru*)." The correct translation of this verse is, of course: "If the debtor is in difficulty, then wait for an easier time (*maysiru*)." In other words, if someone is unable to pay a debt, then allow additional time. To corroborate this we need to look at both verses 2:280 and 2:219 where the same word is used: "In (free time) there is gross harm and some benefits. But their potential to cause harm is greater than their benefit." [Verse 2.219]. This means that too much time on a person's hands can lead to mischief. An English idiom aptly says "The devil makes work for idle hands". What this means is that when someone is not being productive, trouble is likely to follow. Conclusion: *maysiru* means spare/additional/extra time.

Another word, *zakaa*, is traditionally translated as 'charity/poor due' and sometimes, correctly as 'pure', as in verse 19:19. However, '*sadaqat*' which means sincere is also translated as charity as in verse 58:13 in which both words appear, therefore causing some confusion. Also the world *hajj* is wrongly translated as 'pilgrimage' and as 'dispute', but it is *jadal* that means to dispute or argue and both these words appear in verse 2:197. When words are wrongly translated, they highlight the deficiency in understanding their true and proper meanings. Another example is the use of words *bayta* and *buyat*. Traditionally translated as 'house' and 'family/people' both these are wrong as can been seen in verse 33:33 in which they both appear. The proper meanings are 'system' and 'house' as can be confirmed by the roots of the words - this is true for all words shown here as examples and for other words throughout the Quran.[12]

[12] **Words generally mistranslated:** with correct meanings in brackets: ***sadaqat*** (truth/ sincerity), zakaa (pure) and solaa (commitments) - all three appear in verse 58:13. ***hajj*** (challenge/ confront) and jadal (argue), both appear in verse 2:197. ***bayta*** (system) and buyat (home), both appear in verse 33:33. See also verse and footnote 71:28. ***afu*** (pardon) and ghafur (protect), both appear in verse

The Quran can and should be translated into other languages in order for people to receive the message (see Verses 26:198-201 and 41:44-45). However, it is essentially difficult, if not impossible, to translate anything into another language in the same style as the original and translating from Arabic is no different. An English translation or exposition must employ arbitrary and precise words for the many-faceted and jewel-like phrases of the Arabic, and the more literal it is, the greyer and more colourless it becomes. Even a simple sentence as: "We are the ones who control life and death, to Us is the final return." [Verse 50:43]. It is impossible to present in English (or perhaps any other language) the force of the five-times repeated "We" in the short sentence of the original.[13]

The Arabic in the Quran is a clear and precise language [verse 26:195]. It is a highly developed instrument of communication that allows it to express important concepts with a high level of accuracy. For example, the verbs and adjectives can selectively and unmistakably refer to males, females, or two people, or more than two people. The efficiency of Arabic can be illustrated; for example, '*qaalataa*' in verse 28:23 requires four words in English: "The two women said".

What makes this rendition different?

This exposition is different because of its absolute consistency in the application of roots that form the words. It is essential that the root meanings are steadfastly applied, only then does the claim that the Quranic language is incisive and precise stand. In traditional translations rules are applied, but with great flexibility and many diverse meanings are given to one word, giving rise to difficulties often resulting in misleading interpretations. The Quran then becomes ambiguous and confusing - entirely opposite to what it really is. If a word has multiple and ambiguous meanings then what makes the Quran an incisive and precise message?

It is important to understand the basic structure of Arabic as used in the Quran for those who wish to know the Quran with some accuracy, and to appreciate why some of the fundamental aspects of Deen-Islam have been dealt with differently from the traditional understanding.

While translations try to mirror what is said in the original text, an exposition is an interpretation that *conveys the message* in a way that the recipient can easily understand, without necessarily trying to imitate the linguistic style or structure of the original. Where the use of language does not detract from the message, the original structure can be maintained, as

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58:2. ***nabi*** (envoy) and rasul (messenger) both appear in verses 7:157; 22:53. ***solaa*** (commitments) dua (supplication), both appear in verse 14.40. See also footnotes to above verses.

[13] **Professor** H.A.R. Gibb, Modern Trends in Islam, page 4.

it generally has been in this rendition. This may give the verses a more 'Shakespearean' tone but also gives them character and distinction and sets them apart from ordinary prose.

However, nothing can replace the original Quran in Arabic. This rendition is presented only as an endeavour to express the original meaning of the Quranic message in everyday English. This is by no means a definitive work, in the course of time other, better interpretations may appear and should be welcomed.

The Deen-Islam is grossly misunderstood partly as a result of poor translations. A metamorphosis has taken place: a unique and dynamic social system, the Deen-Islam, has been changed into a perverse *religion* masquerading as Islam. The very fact that there are so many versions practised by diverse sects is evidence enough that there is something seriously wrong.

Traditional readers may not recognise some of the concepts elucidated here, just as Muhammad, to whom the original message was given, would not recognise any of the perversions practiced today.

None of these concepts are new, of course. While the Deen-Islam, the social order, has always maintained the same enduring Permanent Values, when we look around, the 'Islam' we see today has unrecognisably changed into a religion: hollow, ritualised and utterly meaningless - in fact, the same as any other religion. This rendition has pruned all the superfluous elements and the embellishments of tradition, culture and political bias and reverted to the original text of the Quran to reconstruct the tenets of Deen-Islam to its former pristine status.

The words in this rendition have been checked to correspond to their roots so that the meaning remains consistent throughout the reading. Some of the words have been left in the original Arabic, as the corresponding English meanings are either completely deficient or totally distorted - however, an explanation is provided in such cases. The English language has liberally absorbed many foreign, including Arabic, words and the introduction of some new words can only add to its richness.

Arabic words have been translated according to the context to give an accurate understanding of the verse. For example, the word *'hadith'* has been translated as narration, remark, discourse or message, depending on the best fit to explain the verse. The reason why synonyms are used for this and some other words is to convey the many facets of the Arabic words. This helps express the different shades of the meanings *while* remaining true to the root. This technique is necessary due to the deficiency in English that no single word projects the depth and breadth of some Arabic words found in the Quran. The context identifies and confirms that the meaning is correctly transposed in accordance with the root.

It will be very useful to read the 'Quranic Concepts' section for a better understanding of the Quranic perspective and how this differs from traditional beliefs. Also the reader will be able to appreciate why the footnotes give cross references to words which at first appear unrelated. For example, the words *'hajj'* and *'jadal'* are shown together. Why is this? Hajj means to challenge or confront, and jadal means to argue, but in traditional translations 'hajj' is shown to mean pilgrimage *and* argue, however, it is only jadal that means argue. This murky water needs to be made clear so that when reading the Quranic, it is consistent.

As previously mentioned, the Arabic language derives its vocabulary from root words. Conjugations of the root word can produce new derivatives and generally these derivatives are constructed in accordance with established vocalic moulds or patterns to which certain prefixes or suffixes are added. The Arabic verbs have two 'voices' - active and passive.

It is common to see in the Quran a prefix like '*ma'* or '*mu*' placed before a word to form a new word in the same class. The two parts are joined together, written as one word. A suffix can also be placed after a word so that a new word is formed. The suffix decides which word class the new word belongs to.

These appear only in the perfect and imperfect and they are constructed according to established moulds or patterns. The imperfect is formed by the addition of prefixes and suffixes that indicate the form of the verb as well as by the gender and number of the participants of the action. Being specific is a strength of the Arabic language and it does not leave room for ambiguity.

The Arabic in the Quran is very precise but there are those who wrongly claim that the Arabic in the Quran is inferior as a definitive language. It would be prudent to remember that, at the time of writing, Arabic was among the most developed languages of the time. Even now the Arabic in the Quran is exceptional in its consistency, only the understanding has deteriorated with time. From another perspective, God used the most current and up to date language of that era to explain a simple and perfectly defined message. After all, it is doubtful that anyone on earth speaks God's language, thus he wisely chose to use the *lingua franca* of the time. Subsequently, however, the original meanings were contorted and as a consequence the original message became beyond recognition, changing the perception of the Quran from a book of guidance to a book of religion.

Since Arabs were the first recipients of the Quran, descriptions of heaven, hell and some other situations are illustrated by using symbolic language so that even a largely illiterate population could easily understand them. While these figurative descriptions may help to illustrate certain places or event, they are still allegories and should not be taken literally.

The verses in the Quran are structured in a way to inform and enlighten the reader at many levels. As stated at the beginning of verse 3:7, the commands, permanent values and general guidance are straightforward and can be easily followed; other information is given as allegorical examples.

Other information and footnotes

In this New Millennium Exposition, the word 'he' is used for both 'he' and 'she'. This is only to maintain the flow of reading and does not necessarily imply only the male gender. In addition, when in this exposition God is referred to as 'He', this does not imply that God is male. God is neither male nor female; God is above gender. In the same way, in Arabic 'the door' is masculine and 'the window' is feminine, even though we know that neither of these things have gender. In English, however, when God is referred to as 'He' it can create the subconscious impression that God is male, and when God is referred to as the 'Father', it reinforces the image of God as particularly male. Similarly when God speaks the word 'We' is used and this does not represent multiplicity implying that God is one of many acting together, but shows the majesty of God as the sustainer of all things.

The footnotes give a brief description of the word used or the concept introduced and the last section explains the Quranic concepts in more detail. Furthermore, these are also cross-referenced to show that a continuity of meaning is expressed throughout the rendition. These references validate the root and its usage, demonstrating consistency, and also show that the meaning does not change, as it incorrectly does in traditional translations to support innovated rituals or ideas.

When reading the Quran it should be noted that verses relating to any one particular subject may not be found together. So it is important to read all the relevant verses together in order to understand the context and substance of the message, decree or set of values given. In his translation, The Message of the Quran, Muhammad Asad has made some excellent points. He said: "*The Quran must be viewed not as a compilation of individual injunctions and exhortations but as one integral whole: that is, as an exposition of an ethical doctrine in which every verse and sentence has an intimate bearing on other verses and sentences, all of them clarifying and amplifying one another. Consequently, its real meaning can be grasped only if we correlate every one of its statements with what has been stated elsewhere in its passages, and explain its concepts by means of frequent cross-referencing, always subordinating the particular to the general and the incidental to the intrinsic. Whenever this rule is faithfully followed, we realise that the Quran is its own best commentary.*"

Attaching inconsistent meanings is typical of all traditional translations this is why they are replete with anomalies. For example, the two translations by Rashad Khalifa state that it is the first English rendering by a Muslim whose mother tongue is Arabic. However, this only provides evidence that knowing Arabic as a mother tongue is no guarantee that you understand the Quran. To illustrate this point both Khalifa's translations of verse 4:3 are worth looking at. The first lines of this verse are quoted here:

Khalifa *First edition:* If you deem it in the best interest of the orphans (to give them a home), you may marry their mother if you like; you may marry two of them, or three, or four.

Khalifa *Second edition:* If you deem it best for the orphans, you may marry their mothers - you may marry two, three, or four.

Now it does not take a native Arabic speaker, or even a scholar to see the glaring error in the interpretation of this verse. The question that should now be asked is: how on earth do you marry the *mother* of an *orphan*, let alone two, or three or four of them?

It has to be said, that although Kahlifa is severely discredited by his second edition, along with his claims to God's messenger, his first edition generally remains one of the better translations of the last century.

Abdullah Yousaf Ali's translation is widely used, but most readers do not know that Yousaf Ali used an Urdu version and translated it into English with no reference to the original Arabic. Like his predecessors he simply followed the traditions confirming prevalent beliefs. His translation of Verse 4:3, though not quoted here, does not give any clearer a picture than does Khalifa's. Ali's translation, as with most traditional translations, of the word *solaa-waa-tun* is astonishing. In verse 22:40 he has translated it as *synagogue*s while in verse 2:157 he has translated it as *blessings*. Some, just as bizarrely, translate it as churches or oratories. However Ali's translation is no worse than any of his contemporaries.

When translators overlook such simple matters that are easy to check, what of the other discrepancies that are not so easy to verify? This exposition is set apart by its consistent application of rules making for a accurate and clearer understanding resulting in an authoritative and accessible text in a way that others are not. [14]

[14] **The sincere who seek the truth** never fail to understand it: The Most Merciful who teaches the Quran. Verses 55:1-2. Once revealed by God He explains the Quran 75:16-19.

QURAN: SELF-REFERENCE

We have revealed this consummate reminder and absolutely We will safeguard it.
[Verse 15:9]

The self-reference theorem can be applied perfectly to the Quran. It works in a similar way to that in which a check digit operates in a barcode. The statements in the Quran can be checked with each other to verify and validate the information. We can see that comparative word occurrences as a logical demonstration of how the Quran meets the test of self-reference, where other books claiming to be divine guidance do not.

There was a fundamental crisis around the turn of the 20th century: a basic disturbance that affected all logic until it was repaired. Logicians realised that for centuries they had left out the concept of 'Self-reference'. For centuries, Aristotle's rule of the 'Excluded Middle' had been used. This rule is a proposition that states "Every proposition is either true or false". But what if that proposition is in itself false? People did not pose this question for centuries; not so in the Quran. If the Quran is what it claims to be then it should be aware of self-reference as applied to its own statements.

Paul Davies, professor of Mathematical Physics at the University of Adelaide in Australia, in his book, 'The Mind of God' (1992), talks about how self-reference shook the very foundations of logic and how, eventually, the issue was resolved. In spite of its superficial plausibility, the formalist interpretation of mathematics received a severe blow in 1931. In that year the Austrian mathematician and logician, Kurt Gödel, proved that there are some mathematical statements for which no systematic procedure is able to determine whether they are true or false. The fact that there can be un-decidable propositions in mathematics came as a great shock, because it seemed to undermine the entire logical foundations of the subject.

Gödel's theorem springs from a constellation of paradoxes that surrounds the notion of *self-reference*. The great mathematician and philosopher, Bertrand Russell, demonstrated that the existence of such paradoxes *strikes at the very heart of logic*, and undermines any straightforward attempt to construct mathematics rigorously on a logical foundation.

Gödel went on to adapt the difficulties of self-reference to the subject of mathematics in a brilliant and unusual manner. He considered the relationship between the description of mathematics and the mathematics itself. In this way, logical operations about mathematics can be made to correspond to the mathematical operations themselves, and this is the essence of the self-referential character of Gödel's proof. By identifying the subject with the object - *mapping the description of the mathematics onto the mathematics* - he uncovered a Russellian paradoxical loop that led directly to the inevitability of un-decidable propositions (Davies 1993: pages 100-101).

Self-reference takes into consideration the 'use' and the 'mention' of words. When you 'use' a word, it is the meaning of the word that is implied. When you 'mention' a word, you are talking about the word and not its meaning. Every sentence can thus talk about the words it is using or the meaning of the word. As an example of 'mentioning', if I say, “Youth comes before manhood”, it would be logically incorrect unless specified, the reason being that, in the dictionary, “manhood” (the word and not its meaning), comes before “youth” (the word). Since the Quran talks about numerous things and uses many words, often repeating them many times, if the author of the Quran was a man or group of men we should find many opportunities to find such logical errors of self-reference in the book. However, we find something amazing when we apply the self-reference check.

If we say, “There is a mistake in the Bible” to Billy Graham, for example, he may respond, “No, there is no mistake in the Bible. Show me a mistake.” A mistake could logically be shown in the book by reading a passage like “David made a *mistake*…”: the word mistake is in the Bible. Now, if the Bible were to say: “There is NO mistake in this book”, it would be falsified and disproved logically by that example. This is no trick, it involves delicate matters of logic. However, safely for now, the Bible never makes such a claim, but the Quran does:

“Why do they not study and consider the Quran with care? If it were from other than God they would have found in it many (*kathirun*) contradictions (*ikhteelafun*).” Verse 4:82.

The meaning of the statement (use of words) is clear. Considering the nature of the Book and its diverse topics and areas of discussion, if the Book had a human origin, it should be easy to find discrepancies in it. If we consider the 'mention' of the words, a different picture emerges. Let us see if the Quran passes its own falsification test on the criteria of 'self-reference' using the 'mention' of words.

In the 'mention' of the word *contradictions* (*ikhteelafun*), the meaning that emerges is: if the book had a human origin, it should contain many *contradictions*, the word). Many denotes more than one. To check how many times the word 'ikhteelafun' (contradictions) occurs in the Quran, we make use of an index of every Arabic word in the Quran. Due to the work of Faud Abd al Baqi, we possess such an index of the Quran today, titled 'Al Moojam al Mofarhis'.

Indeed, the author of the Quran is aware of self-reference and the Quran passes the test of the 'mention' of words, as the word *'ikhteelafun'* (contradictions) is mentioned *just once* in the whole Quran: in this particular verse; not many (kathirun) times, but only once.

Some people band together the last two words of this verse - many (kathirun) contradictions (ikhteelafun). Then they say the Quran mentions the words ikhteelafun kathirun (Many Contradictions) and the verse says that if it came from other than God, it would contain ikhteelafun kathirun (many contradictions). This is a very smart move in trying to prove the Quran false, but it's not smart enough.

People who try to disprove the Quran by taking the last two words in conjunction are implying, in the mention of words, that if the Quran contains the words 'ikhteelafun kathirun' (many contradictions), it was written by other than God. The statement in the Quran is not saying that: it is saying that books from other than God can contain those words, but so also can a book from God. Thus they fall into the famous Fallacy of the Converse in logic. Rain means wet streets, but wet streets do not necessarily mean rain. Similarly, the Quran did not say: "If it contains ikhteelafun kathirun (many contradictions), it came from other than God". It does not say that. By banding the two words ikhteelafun kathirun (many contradictions) together, they remove the qualifier, kathirun (many) which changes the statement.

Jesus is like Adam

"The example of Jesus (Arabic: *Eesa*), with God, is like that of Adam; *He created him with a different constitution and commanded him to "Be" and he was created."* Verse 3:59.

The meaning of the statement is clear: Jesus' birth is initiated like Adam. However, in the mention of words, it says that the word 'Jesus' in the Quran is like the word 'Adam'. It is surprising to note that indeed the word 'Jesus' (page 494 of the index) in its mention in the Quran is like the mention of the word 'Adam' (page 24 of the index). Both words occur in the Quran twenty-five times. Not only that, they are in the same order of succession. The verse that mentions that they are like each other is the seventh time the word 'Jesus' is mentioned and the seventh time 'Adam' is mentioned.

The example of a dog

"Thus, he [who rejected our guidance] was like a dog, whether you petted him or ignored him, he just panted. Such is the example of people who reject Our signs." Verse 7:176.

The Arabic word used for dog is 'kalb' (singular). The word for dog in the singular occurs in the Quran five times. The statement "people who reject our signs" occurs five times in the Quran also. Verse 7:176 is the first time the word 'dog' (singular) is mentioned in the Quran (page 614 of the above mentioned index), and the first time the statement "people who reject our signs" (pages 583-584 of the index) is mentioned. Therefore the example of "people who reject our signs" is like the example of a dog (*kalb*), in the mention of words.

Blind and seeing not alike:

"The blind (*al-aama*) and the seeing (*al-baseer*) are not equal. Nor are the depths of darkness (*az-zulmaat*) and the light (an-nur). Nor are the coolness of shade (*az-zill*) and the heat (*al-haroor*) of the sun." Verses 35:19-21.

Please make sure while checking the count in the index that you take note of the word 'the'. For example, 'the light' (*an-nur*) is different from just 'light' (*nur*). Therefore attention needs to be paid, while counting, to the *specific* or the *general* usage of the word.

The word for 'the blind' (*al-aama*) occurs in the Quran eight times (page 448 of the index). The word used for 'the seeing' (*al-baseer*) occurs nine times (pages 121-122 of the index). Therefore 'the blind' and 'the seeing' are not alike. The statement of the Quran above which mentions that 'the blind' and 'the seeing' are not alike is the fifth time in succession that the word for 'the seeing' is used in the Quran and also the fifth time in succession that the word for 'the blind' is used.

The word used for "the depths of darkness" (*az-zulumat*) occurs twelve times in the Quran (pages 438-439 of the index) and the word for 'the light' (*an-nur*) occurs thirteen times (page 725 of the index). Thus "the depths of darkness" (*az-zulumat*) are not the same as 'the light' (*an-nur*).

The other trend that we notice above appears in these words too. The statement above which mentions that 'the light' is not as "the depths of darkness" is the tenth time both words are used in the Quran, if we take into consideration the use of the words in successive progression in the Book.

Another amazing thing that we notice is that the same statement is repeated in verse 13:16, and the same trend emerges (which makes it impossible to be a coincidence): "Say: 'Are the blind and the seeing equal or is the depths of darkness equal to the light?' " [Verse 13:16].

If we check the succession, it is the sixth time the word for 'the depths of darkness' (*az-zulumat*) is used and the sixth time the word for 'the light' (*an-Nur*) is used in the Quran. We can do the same with the first part that we already covered above: 'The blind' (*al-aama*) are not as 'the seeing' (al-baseer). In the verse above, chapter 13, it is the third time the word 'the blind' (*al-aama*) is used and the third time the word 'the seeing' (*al-baseer*) is used (in the verse which says one is not like the other) in the Quran. In chapter 35 above, we saw that it was the fifth time that both words were used in the Quran.

Another trend is also emerging from the above: whenever the Quran says that something is not like the other, the positive mentioned is always one more than the negative. For example 'the seeing' (+) as opposed to 'the blind' (-) and 'the light' (+) as opposed to 'the depths of darkness' (-). As

we saw above, 'the seeing' (*al-baseer*) is mentioned *nine* times as opposed to the *eight* of 'the blind' (*al-aama*). Similarly, "the light (*an-nur*) is mentioned *thirteen* times as opposed to the *twelve* times that "the depths of darkness" (*az-zulumat*) is mentioned.

The above examples should be enough to confirm this amazing trend in the Quran, but let us look at another instance. The statement above in verse 35 continues:

"... nor are the coolness of the shade (az-zill) and the heat (al-haroor) of the sun." Verse 35:21.

The word used for 'shade' (*az-zill*) is mentioned in the Quran four times (page 434 of the index) and the word 'the heat' (*al-har*) is mentioned three times. The statement (Verse 35:21) which mentions that 'the shade' is not the same as 'the heat' is the third time both words *'az-zill'* and *'al-har'* are used in the Quran.

Did the Quran Fail?

"Proclaim: The evil (al-khabees) and the good (at-tayyab) are not alike... " [Verse 5:100].

When we come to this particular statement in the Quran on dissimilarity, the items mentioned occur an equal number of times. The word 'the evil' (*al-khabees*) is mentioned seven times (page 226 of the index) and the word 'the good' (*at-tayyab*) seven times also (page 432 of the index). Did the Quran fail? According to our trend above, the negative (the evil) should be one less than the positive (the good). How come 'the evil' is one more than what it should be? The Quran fails only if we cut off the statement in the middle of the sentence. The verse needs to be read in full:

"Proclaim: The evil and the good are not alike, even if the abundance of evil amazes you. You shall fulfil your duty to God, those who possess intelligence and understanding, that you may succeed." [Verse 5:100].

If we are careful, just as the above statement mentions, we notice that God joins together all 'the evil' (*al-khabees*) in the use of words, i.e. all different forms of the word and not only 'the evil' (*al-khabees*), in order to differentiate between evil and good. Thus 'the evil' (*al-khabees*) is separated from 'the good' (*at-tayyab*).

"God will separate the evil from the good, and the evil (*khabees*) will clamber upon each other, then heaped together, they will fall over themselves in a hell of their own making. Such are the losers." [Verse 8:37].

Now, acting on the advice of the above verse in the *mention of words*, if we *heaped together* all the 'evil' (*khabees*) in its different forms of use in the Quran, and the many root forms, we end up with sixteen times that the word 'evil' is mentioned as against seven for the word 'good'. Thus the good and the evil are not alike if we 'heap them together', even though the abundance (sixteen against seven) of the 'evil' amazes us.

This itself says volumes for the inimitability of the Quran. How could a man or group of men have produced such a mathematically and logically

sound book without having any formal education in logic or mathematics and without access to any computer software or indexes? Furthermore, the Quran negates the absurd and widely held belief that it was first written on bone, palm leaves and stones, or that it had no particular order or sequence in Muhammad's lifetime. See verses 2:2; 6:91; 15:9; 75:17; 80:15.

Months and days

In the index of the Quran, if we look at the number of times the word 'month' (shahr) is mentioned, it turns out to be twelve. There are twelve 'months' in the Quran. The number of times the word 'day' in the singular (yaum or yauma) is mentioned turns out to be three hundred and sixty five.

The self-reference also serves to provide evidence that the Quran hasn't been tampered with. The statement that mentions 'this is like that', for example, is the same in succession in the 'mention' of words. The verse that says that "Jesus is like Adam", for example, is the seventh time both Jesus and Adam are mentioned. If there were any tampering, in the setting of the chapters or the numbering of the verses or additions or deletions, this sequence would break down. The Quran is a much too sophisticated work to be that of a simple desert man, who would never have been able to keep track of all the accurate positioning and counted use of words, as well as maintaining the integrity of the message.

Indeed, Everything We created in precise proportion and measure. [Verse 54:49].
Everything in His domain is perfectly measured by God. [Verse 13:8].
We have revealed this consummate reminder and absolutely We will safeguard it. [Verse 15:9].

The Bible paradox

Is the Bible free from contradictions of self-reference? The famous 'Epimenedes paradox' is well known. Paul, writing to Titus, says about the Cretans: *"One of themselves, even a prophet of their own said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true..."* (Titus 1:12-13, The Bible). An analysis based on self-reference tells us that if the statement that Cretans are always liars is true, then, since "one of themselves" (a Cretan) said this, it must be a lie, since Cretans always lie (according to the statement made). If the statement is true then it is a lie (based on self-reference). Only if the statement that "Cretans are always liars" is false can this 'witness' be true. Therefore it's a paradox, a contradiction that cannot be resolved. Although this evidence does not prove anything about the Quran, what it does show is that the author of Titus knew nothing about self-reference, which if the scripture is claimed to be a divine message would be absolutely critical.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Bismallah-Alrahman-Alraheem

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

LA ILAHA ILALLAH

THERE IS NO AUTHORITY TO RANK WITH GOD

Shall I seek other than God as an authority of law,
when He has revealed this book fully detailed?
[Verse 6:114]

THE QURAN

GOD'S MESSAGE TO MANKIND

As you read the Quran, God's message is being revealed to you.

When you read the Quran, you shall seek refuge in God from shaitan, the egotistic aspect of your Self, so that you do not deviate from the right path.
[Verse 16:98]

THE QURAN

GOD'S MESSAGE TO MANKIND

Most high is the One who revealed this criterion: the statute,
to His servant, so that he can serve as a warner to the whole world.
[Verse 25:1]

GOD'S COVENANT WITH YOU

The Quran, although the first recipients were the residents of Arabia, is guidance for the whole world with the history of the Children of Israel featuring prominently as a lesson for all mankind. As mentioned in verse 2:40 the Children of Israel made a covenant with God and attested it with the words "We hear and we obey". In the following verses up to verse 2:44, God is calling them to accept the Quran and they should not confound the truth with falsehood nor conceal the truth knowingly. They are commanded to uphold their commitments and keep them pure. This clearly shows that the Quran was meant not only for the Arabs but for entire mankind, including the Children of Israel. However, the Children of Israel broke their covenant and failed to keep their promise to serve God. As noted in verse 2:93, they defiantly declared: 'We hear but do not obey.'

The Quran addresses all mankind but its *message* is revealed only to those who receive God's mercy, and *it is for the individual to ignite that compassion by taking steps to seek the truth*. The majority may not even realise this as they begin to understand and make the distinction between truth and falsehood [verse 2:185] - however, when you accept God's guidance you are taught by Him to declare "We hear and we obey." [verse 2:285] as a covenant between servant and Master. It is reasonable to say that it is a duty upon the servants to commit themselves totally to what is revealed by Him in His book as a way of life to attain harmony within His System, and furthermore this commitment must be kept pure at all times. As an inaugurating supplication to seek God's protection, the example in verse 2:286 is an excellent way to affirm this.

As you continue your study of the Quran you are reminded in verse 5:1 not to break your covenant with God and in verse 5:3 individuals are told by God that: "This day, I have perfected your Deen, the established Order, perfected My favours upon you and I have decreed for you harmony in the System of this Deen-Islam." The word '*you*' here is actually addressed to all individuals.

As we continue reading His sanctions in 5:4 and 5:5, the next verse 5:6 begins with an instruction of a simple cleansing process, this not only symbolizes our willingness to commit ourselves to His decreed way of life, but for physical and spiritual cleanliness in preparation for our daily commitments. The Quran also mentions in the same verse that God wishes no hardship for you - He wishes to cleanse you so that He can complete His favours upon you - so that you may become appreciative of His favours in perfecting the harmonious way of life for you.

In verse 5:7, a strong and clear message is given: "Remember God's favours upon you and the promise that He makes with you, and say: 'We hear and we obey.' You shall follow God's guidance, God is fully aware of your innermost thoughts." It's also important to note that in verse 5:1 God says "Fulfil your promises." - and in 5:7 again the Quran says: "You shall follow God's guidance."

The Quran is in fact a document of *your* covenant and promise with God.[15]

[15] **Covenant with God:** see verse 2:285. Obedience an obligation 24:53. Blueprint for success: 22:15. Contract with God: 9:111. Knowledge priori / conscience 7:172. Pledging allegiance to God 48:10.

THE QURAN

GOD'S MESSAGE TO MANKIND

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Sura 1: The Opening (Al-Fatehah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[1:1] Praise be to the One God,[16] the Sustainer[17] of the universe.
[1:2] The One who is Most Merciful, Most Beneficent[18]
[1:3] The Sovereign: who has full control over the established Order.
[1:4] You alone we serve.[19] From you alone we seek help for our progress.
[1:5] Guide us along the straight and balanced path of Self-development;[20]
[1:6] the path of those who have progressed, not the path of those who have regressed, nor of those who have lost their direction.[21]

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[16] **God, The One God.** (Arabic: *allah*). God has no names, only attributes. In the Quranic text God is referred to as 'He', this does not mean that God has gender. See Verses and footnotes 112:1-4.

[17] **Sustainer:** (Arabic: *rabb*. Root R'B'B). One who provides nourishment for growth and development not only for the body but also for the personality: the human Self. *Rabb* provides all opportunities for realising one's full potential. **The Self:** see verse and footnote 1:5.

[18] **Merciful:** Being merciful is not unconditional forgiveness. Mercy takes place when God provides circumstances for restoring oneself to the original condition before damage was done. Mercy is the balm on a wound and its medical property is also the mercy that heals. The time it takes to heal depends on the extent of the damage done. **Beneficent:** Creating and maintaining suitable environment for healthy growth to realise one's full potential. See verses and footnotes 55:1; 85:16

[19] **Serve:** (Arabic: *ibadat.* Root B'D. Derivatives: *abd, abada*). Serve is not the same as worship. Service is through deeds and it means to fulfil the requirements or actively to achieve a purpose, as opposed to worship which means to show devotion by rituals, pilgrimages, singing of hymns etc. Hands that serve are better than lips that pray.

[20] **The Self:** (Arabic: *nafs.* Root N'F'S. Derivatives: *anfus nufus*). The Self, or the human personality, is often referred to as the 'spirit' or the 'soul' but these are incomplete descriptions of the 'nafs'. The Self is the latent personality that develops or regresses subject to the activities of the individual. It grows not by the subconscious intentions but through the deliberate and premeditated thoughts and acts that the human being performs, not so much by social influence to which the individual is exposed, but by the way in which he reacts to it. Therefore, it is the duty of society to provide opportunities for Self development and it is the duty of every individual to realise such opportunities to their full potential. Freedom is the indispensible condition of moral life. Morality is irrelevant to a being whose actions are determined by outside forces. This freedom, of course, has its stresses and limitations, nevertheless, his actions are free in the sense that they are self-determined, choosing freely from the alternatives available. The individual feels free when his actions are in accord with the characteristics of his Self. However, these need to be disciplined and restricted but when these restrictions are imposed, it is for the sole purpose of turning them to the best account. The self-imposed restrictions are not derogatory to his status as a free individual, freedom properly channelled is the necessary condition of human development, both individual and social. A weak Self can easily drift from the right path. Only a strong Self can forge ahead towards the goal of Self-realisation, survive death and take its proper place in the life yet to come. This is in essence the purpose of life and to achieve this goal God provides His guidance in the Quran. See verses and footnotes 6:54; 49:17; 85:16. **Drifter:** see verse 15:42.

[21] **Most** people prefer to travel on a well-established road for speed, safety and comfort. The Quran is the guidance from God, to follow it means that we do not have to suffer the mishaps of trial and error. The Deen-Islam, a working social system, has come to us readymade: to take us on a sure and guaranteed road to peace and security. See verse and footnote 15:42.

Sura 2: The Heifer (Al-Baqarah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[2:1] A.L.M.[22]

[2:2] This is a book, without doubt a reliable and truthful guidance for the righteous who seek to safeguard themselves from lasting harm,[23]

THE BENEFACTORS OF HUMANITY

[2:3] who also believe[24] in what is not directly evident, observe their commitments[25] and from what We bestow on them they spend[26] and become the benefactors of humanity.

[2:4] And they believe in this revealed guidance and in what was revealed before you and with regard to the continuation of life, they are certain.[27]

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[22] **A.L.M:** There are many chapters that start with individual letters perhaps similar to check digits in bar codes systems. The significance of this is something future researchers will discover but does not affect the essential guidance. See verse and footnote: 3:7.

[23] **Righteous** who safeguard themselves: (Arabic: *mutaqeen* from *taqwa*. Root T'Q. Derivatives: *taqiy, tuqat, ittaqa, muttaqi*). People who take care and safeguard their righteousness and protect themselves from lasting harm by following this guidance and fulfilling their duty to God. The word *'mutaqeen'* has been translated as 'righteous', because safeguarding good works from corruption is an implicit act of being a righteous and conscientious individual.

[24] **The criteria** for a righteous person is given in verse 2:177. The word 'muslim' (root S'L'M) is the Arabic word for one who submits and harmonises with God's law. It is an adjective and expresses the characteristic of an exemplary person who believes and acts to develop his or her Self in order to advance society. An individual *becomes* a *believer*, a muslim; one who harmonises with God's system. A person can be a 'muslim' only by choice, not birth. It's character and actions that show this status, whether the word 'muslim' is used to describe such an individual or not is irrelevant.

[25] **Commitment,** obligation, pledge, steadfastness. (Arabic*: solaa.* Root: S'L'W. Derivatives: *faSolaa, yuSilla, muSollan* plus others). Commitments mean remaining steadfast with the positive fulfilment of obligations and to keep your promises: to yourself, your family, your friends and everyone else including your community and country. Commitments should be kept pure of any corruptions and within Quranic values. Other usages of *solaa*: 2:157; 2:249; 4:101-102; 5:58; 5:106; 5:12-13; 9:4-6; 10:87; 11:87; 11:114; 19:31; 21:73; 24:41; 107:1-7. See also footnote to verses 2:43; 2:125. Also see 33:43; 33:53 & meaning of *zakaa* (pure) 2:43.

[26] **Spend**: expenditure, spend, dues. (Arabic: *anfaqa.* Root N'F'Q Derivatives: *yunfiqu, anfiq, infiq, munfiq*). This word has been translated in various shades of the root meaning depending on the context: provide, payment [verse 60:10], contribute [verse 9:92]. The importance of spending and contributing for the welfare of society is heavily emphasised throughout the Quran. This needs to be in words and deeds throughout the year as opposed to being charitable and giving donations once in a while, or paying annual religious tithes. The Quran advocates not charity but dignity. Social welfare. See verse 2:215, and footnote to 21:112. For related word *munafiq*, see verse 2:8. **Social Welfare**/ Citizen's Income: see verse and footnote 21:112 and the Quranic Concepts section.

[27] **This world** is an environment for the development of the Self and 'death' is a transition to the next stage of life, easy progression for those who have realised their potential and a tormenting rut for those who have wasted their opportunities. Just as when we go to sleep with the certainty that there will be a tomorrow, those who understand this guidance are certain of the life yet to come and prepare their Self to make it fit for that future. See verses 73:20; 75:40; 90:4; 97:1.

[2:5] These are the ones guided by their Sustainer, these are the ones who will achieve ultimate success.

DISBELIEVERS: THE REJECTERS OF THIS GUIDANCE

[2:6] As for those who reject this guidance, it is the same for them, whether you warn them or not warn them, they will not believe.[28]

[2:7] With time their minds and their hearing becomes impervious and their eyes become veiled. They have incurred severe retribution.

THE HYPOCRITES: THOSE WHO FEIGN SINCERITY

[2:8] Then there are those who say, "We believe in accountability to God and the ultimate reckoning," while in reality they reject the truth.[29]

[2:9] In an attempt to deceive God and those who believe, they only deceive their own Self without perceiving.

[2:10] In their minds there is a disease. Consequently, God augments their disease. They have incurred a painful retribution for their lies.

[2:11] When they are told, "Do not make mischief on the earth." They claim: "But we create harmony and peace."

[2:12] In fact, they make only mischief and scheme evil, but are deluded.

[2:13] When they are told, "Believe like the people who believed," they say, "Shall we believe like those who are irrational?" In fact, it is they who commit excesses, but they do not understand their delusion.[30]

[2:14] When they meet the believers of this guidance, they say, "We believe in this." but when alone with their mischievous companions, they say, "We are really with you, we were only being derisive."

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[28] **Disbeliever/rejecter:** (Arabic: *kafir.* Disbelief*: kuffr*). Disbelievers are people who openly reject, deny or conceal the truth, who reject and act against the Absolute laws, Permanent Values as given in the Quran and accountability to God and His sovereign authority and who reject Deen-Islam, the established Social Order. See verses and footnotes 6:25; 109:1-6.

[29] **Hypocrite**: (Arabic: *munafiq.* Root N'F'Q. Derivatives: *nafaqa, nafaqu, nifaq*). The word *munafiq* has been translated as hypocrite simply because the lack of a more appropriate word. There is no single word in the English language that comes close to its proper meaning. The physical body survives by taking air, food, drink etc. By its very nature the human being is greedy, selfish, gluttonous and avaricious. The Self also fights an ongoing battle in its desire to be munificent and realise its potential through development. It seeks to be benevolent, philanthropic, generous, giving and eager for self-sacrifice. The hypocrites feign these highly desirable qualities and attitudes that receive great public approval, while in their private lives such opinions belie their public statements. It is these people who are *munafiq*, those that are stingy and grudging when it comes to self-sacrifice and *expending* their Self for the good of others. The *munafiq* holds back in everything except that which is in their self-interest. God tolerates the hypocrites, giving respite, and they confirm their hypocrisy with their deeds. See verse and footnote 33:73. For related word *anfaq*, see verse 2:3. See verses 3:167; 4:60-61; 9:64; 9:67; 9:97; 9:101; 29:11; 47:30; 63:1; 66:9. **What is evil?** See verses and footnotes 7:201; 10:109; 65:11.

[30] **Unreasonable:** Intemperate, lacking in self-control, going beyond excesses, lacking in self-restraint. (Arabic: *safaha.* Root S'F'H). See verses 2:130; 15:42.

[2:15] God tolerates their delusion and allows them on in their transgression, blundering.
[2:16] It is they who bought the drifting at the expense of guidance. Such trade never prospers nor does guidance ever inspire them.
[2:17] Their example is like the ones who start a fire, then, as it begins to shed light around them, God takes away their light, leaving them in darkness, unable to see.[31]
[2:18] Deaf, dumb and blind, they fail to return.
[2:19] An example of their lack of good sense: a rainstorm from the sky in which there is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears, to evade death, as if they could evade death if lightening struck them. God is fully aware of those who reject this guidance.
[2:20] The lightning almost snatches away their eyesight. When it lights for them, they move forward and when it turns dark, they stand still. If God wills, He can take away their hearing and their eyesight. God is all-powerful.[32]

[2:21] O people, serve only God, the One who created you and those before you, that you may safeguard yourself from lasting harm.
[2:22] The One who made the earth habitable for you and the sky a structure. He sends down from the sky water, to produce all kinds of fruits for your sustenance. You shall not accept any authority to equal or rival God, now that you know.[33]
[2:23] If you have any doubt regarding what We revealed to Our servant, then produce one verse like the original and call upon your own witnesses against God, if you are truthful.[34]
[2:24] If you cannot do this - and you can never do this - then beware of the miserable retribution that awaits to consume you and other material as fuel, it is in abeyance for those who reject this guidance.
[2:25] Give good news to those who believe and lead a life of good works, that they will have possessions more excellent than orchards and gardens

[31] **Throughout** the Quran there are many verses which use allegories, parables, metaphors and other descriptive images that are clearly symbolic. We must remember that since the first recipients of this message were mostly uneducated, simple-living, pagan Arabs, in the scorching desert heat so the description of heaven (and some other things) are an expression of alleviating the daily sufferance of these people, cool shades, flowing rivers and delicious drinks are figures of speech and not literal descriptions. See verse 9:72 and corresponding footnote.
[32] **God's Will** (God's ordinance) is not an arbitrary or a capricious decision. God is absolute and maintains peerless integrity though his laws and all things are determined by them. God's laws are God's way (*sunnatullah*) and this does not change on whim. There is never any change in God's law, it is always consistent. See verses and footnotes 33:62; 49:18. See also verse and footnote 3:7.
[33] **Shirk:** high treason, the most treacherous of all crimes is to set up or accept an authority to rival or equal God. This also includes accepting or living by laws or values that go against the Quranic injunctions and that are derived from other books. See verses and footnote 2:105; 9:1-10.
[34] **A challenge** from God. See verses and footnotes 4:82; 11:13.

watered with flowing streams. When provided with a provision of fruits therein, they will say, "This surpasses what was provided for us previously." Thus, they are given allegorical descriptions. They will have pure companions therein and they abide therein forever.
[2:26] God does not shy away from citing any kind of allegory, from a tiny mosquito and greater. As for those who believe, they know that this is the truth from the one who sustains them. As for those who reject this, they say, "What did God mean by such an example?" Many go adrift thereby and others are guided thereby. But God never misleads, except that the depraved are harmed by their own mischief,
[2:27] who violate God's covenant after pledging to uphold it, sever what God has commanded to be joined and commit evil. These are the losers.

THE BEGINNING OF MANKIND

[2:28] How can you disbelieve in God when you were naught and He gave you life, then He puts you to death, then He brings you back to life, and to Him you ultimately return?
[2:29] He is the One who created for you everything on earth, then turned to the sky and perfected the universe and He is fully aware of all things.
[2:30] Recall that the One who sustains you said to the malaika[35], "I am placing a successor on Earth."[36] They said, "Will You place in there one who will spread evil and shed blood, while we exalt Your praises, glorify You and uphold Your absolute authority?" He said, "I know what you do not know."[37]

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[35] **Malaika:** the energies, forces of nature and messengers, working in the universe, the world and within the body: neuron transport messaging, creating atmospheric changes, light and heat etc. See verses and footnotes 6:8; 8:9; 17:95; 43:19; 53:27. **Iblees** (*shaitan*) is a malaika, albeit invisible and latent with the capacity to manifest as a detrimental force of influence. See verse and footnote 18:50.

[36] **Successor:** (Arabic: *khalifa.* Root: KH'L'F. Derivatives: *khalf, khilafa, istakhlafa*). Khalifa means to succeed, to follow or replace through change and evolution. This word is often mistakenly translated as 'representative' and man is wrongly considered as 'khalifatulla' or representative of God. There is not a single instance in the Quran where man is described as 'khalifatulla'. Man is rather described as 'khalifat-al-ard', that is successor on earth. This simply means that man has evolved as a successor from previous creations in the process of evolution. If we follow the view that God has delegated power to man, then God must no longer be omnipotent or omniscient. The Quran, as we can see, amply clarifies that a *khalifa* is a successor in the absence or death of his predecessor. The question of somebody being a representative of God does not arise. The concept of 'representative' is the innovation of self-interested individuals who wanted to exploit people by posing as God's 'vice-regents'. **God made man** to succeed the previous generations of creation. The corruption and bloodshed spread by man is evident, lawlessness is the rule of the day. In contrast, the total obedience by the malaika who consistently and without fail follow the laws of God is also evident in the world around us. How do the malaika glorify God? Honouring God and glorifying Him is by following His laws. Willingly following and implementing His guidance is the best way to glorify God. See verses 10:15; 21:20; 27:62; 35:39; 36:82.

[37] **Evil and bloodshed.** Of all the animals, man alone has the capacity to learn and develop from his knowledge. A lion today does much the same as a lion did a thousand years ago, and the same is true

[2:31] He gave Adam the ability to distinguish all things, then presented him to the malaika, saying, "Give Me the names of these, if you know."[38]
[2:32] They said, "Be You glorified, we have no knowledge, except that which You have taught us. You are the One who is aware of all things and the One Most Wise."
[2:33] He said, "O Adam, tell them their names." When Adam told them their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of the Heavens and the Earth? I know what you declare and what you conceal."[39]
[2:34] When We said to the malaika, "Yield yourselves before Adam," they conceded, except Iblees, his latent ego was too arrogant and rejected God's command.[40]
[2:35] We said, "O Adam, live with your wife in Paradise and eat from there generously, as you please, but do not divide as the branches like this tree creating a schism, lest you transgress and harm yourself."
[2:36] But their ego perplexed them and caused their downfall in status and from a state of harmony. We said, "Go down to earth and face the trials of life and endeavour to redeem your Self. On the earth shall be your habitation and provision for awhile."[41]

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of a sheep or a fish. Man alone has the capability for extreme corruption and for the systematic killing of his fellow beings, even people that he has known, lived and shared food with. However, conversely, man also has the exceptional power of self-sacrifice for the good of others in a way that no other creature has. Humans, like their closest relatives (and those they share a common ancestry with) the chimps, may have a predisposition to coalition violence and the associated tendency for genocide, but the difference is that humans are not constrained by genetic inheritance. God has endowed humans with the ability to reason and choose to act against their detrimental natural impulses. God knows what the malaika or anyone else does not know. See verse 7:201.

[38] **Adam** is a symbolic name and reference for all mankind, every individual Self is represented by this allegorical person called Adam. When the malaika are ordered to submit to Adam, in reality the ability to harness the forces of nature are given to mankind, except of course the independent 'free will', the egotistic aspect of the Self, which is represented here by Iblees, also mentioned as shaitan, the negative feature of our personality. See verses: 7:11-27; 17:61-65; 18:50-53; 20:116-124; 36:60-64; 45:13.

[39] **What** are the heavens and the earth? This, of course is the Universe, all the systems that we can see and the ones that we cannot see. See verse 45:13.

[40] **The malaika** do not have 'free will', they comply with God's law, however, Iblees, the rebellious malaika, represents the egotistical Self of all mankind and is a 'Free-willed' entity. This is a metaphorical description of God granting mankind dominance over the world's resources. Everything, except man's own free will/ego, is committed to serve mankind. See verses 17:60; 22:65. See also verses and footnotes 31:20; 45:13.

[41] **The Self:** (Arabic: *nafs.* Root: N'F'S. Derivatives: *anfus, nufus*). This is the latent human personality that emanates from the Ruh, the directive energy *from* God, but not *of* God. Good, munificent deeds progress the development of the Self and bad, corrupt actions regress and stunt its growth. As part of our evolutionary movement and as we transit into the next stage of life, after death, it is the strong Self that will live an enriched life, while the weak Self will struggle in a torment that we call hell. So in fact each individual decides their own future by what he or she chooses to do in this life.

[2:37] Then, Adam received from his Sustainer some words of guidance, whereby He raised his status. He is the Redeemer, Most Merciful.
[2:38] We said, "Go down there, all of you. When My guidance comes to you, those who follow My guidance will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.
[2:39] "As for those who disbelieve and reject My guidance, they will become dwellers in a hell of their own making, wherein they abide forever."[42]

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

[2:40] O Children of Israel,[43] remember My favours, which I bestowed upon you and fulfil your promise and I will fulfil My promise and do your duty to Me.
[2:41] You shall believe in this guidance that I have revealed here, confirming what you have, do not be the first to reject it. Do not trade away My guidance for a cheap gain and fulfil your duty to Me.
[2:42] Do not confound the truth with falsehood, nor shall you conceal the truth knowingly.
[2:43] You shall observe your commitments[44] and keep them pure[45] and humbly consent to harmonise with all those who submit.[46]

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[42] **Hell** in its conventional meaning is misleading as it conveys a religious description of a *place* of torture for those who sin. The Arabic word *jahannam* is a much better description as it means life in regression. We either develop our Self or stunt its progress and when the transition to the next life takes place only a developed Self will be fit to enjoy the pleasures, while a weak Self will struggle: this is the misery and torment of the life yet to come, a hell of our own making. This is because hell is a state of mind and environment that is the result of our own deeds. A higher life can be achieved only by a developed personality. The evolution of a personality not so developed is bound to be thwarted. This kind of infernal life is called *Jahannam* i.e. hell. To cease to aspire, or have frustrated the ability by your own actions, is to be doomed to hell. See verses 2:206; 15:42.

[43] **'The Children of Israel'** now generally known as Jews, are so called because they are of the Judean tribe, one of the tribes of the Hebrews. Now all Hebrews are called Jews - irrespective of which tribe they originally belonged to, not only that but over the millennia many people who were not Hebrews have been assimilated into the Jewish fold. In the Quran, communities such as Lot's people, Noah's people and Shu'aib's people are used as historical examples. The Children of Israel are the most important case study for all people to learn from. God gives their examples throughout the Quran in significant detail: all events that the Children of Israel experienced in the past are lessons for people today. See 2:135, 3:67-68.

[44] **Commitments:** (Arabic: *solaa*). Solaa of the Children of Israel. See footnote to verse 2:3.

[45] **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*. from the root Z'K'W. Derivatives: *zakka, taZakka, zakki, taZak-ki, yu-Zakka, yuZak-ki*). Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. Therefore, keeping your commitments and obligations pure and unadulterated is an important part of life because genuine sincerity cannot exist when mixed with polluted ideas. See verses 2:83; 2:129; 2;151; 2:277; 9:102-3; 18:81; 19:13; 19:19; 19:31; 22:78; 24:21; 35:18; 58:12,13; 79:17-18; 91:1-9.

[46] **Humbly concede:** (Arabic: *ruku-wa-sujud*). Submission, to accept and concede or yield, is one of the key concepts for those who accept the Deen-Islam. Submission is to acquiesce fully and completely to the injunctions in the Quran and accountability to God. To humbly concede is to accept them with absolute deference and without any arrogance. This does not mean that we do not apply intellect and intelligence - far from it. We accept physical laws and never revolt against them and any person who attempts to do so will suffer the consequences. None but the insane

[2:44] Do you exhort other people to do good while forgetting yourselves, though you have My guidance? Do you not understand?
[2:45] You shall seek help through steadfastness and observing your commitments. This is difficult indeed, but not for those who keep their duty to Him,
[2:46] who believe that they will meet their God, the One who sustains them, and that to Him they ultimately return.

CHILDREN OF ISRAEL SAVED FROM FIRAWN

[2:47] O Children of Israel,[47] remember My favours which I bestowed upon you and that I blessed you more than any other people.
[2:48] Beware of the day when no person can help another, no intercession will be accepted, no ransom can be paid nor can anyone be helped.[48]
[2:49] Recall that We saved you from Firawn's[49] people who inflicted upon you the worst persecution, slaying your sons and defiling your women. That was an exacting test from your Sustainer.
[2:50] Recall that We parted the water for you, We saved you and drowned Firawn's people before your eyes.
[2:51] Yet, when We summoned Moses for forty nights, you worshiped the calf in his absence and became depraved.
[2:52] Still, We pardoned you thereafter that you may be appreciative.[50]
[2:53] Recall that We gave Moses guidance and the statute book, that you may be guided.
[2:54] Recall that Moses said to his people, "O my people, you have wronged your Self by worshiping the calf. You must repent to your Creator.

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will try to defy gravity by jumping off a cliff or climbing down into an erupting volcano thinking himself invulnerable to the effects of fire. Quranic values offer long term benefits to both individuals and societies. They nurture the strength of the Self to help face the challenges that life inevitably throws at the human being. None but those lacking insight will reject this concept.

[47] **Children of Israel:** so called because they were the descendents of a man called Israel and not because they were destined to live in a land named Israel. See also verse and footnote 2:40.

[48] **Intercession** is undeserved favouritism. See verse and footnote 2:254.

[49] **Firawn:** commonly known as Pharaoh, is a proper name of a person and not a term or description for rulers such as kings. Archaeological research shows that the Egyptians were excellent record keepers. However, there is no evidence in any of the hieroglyphs to show that rulers in ancient Egypt were called Pharaohs. The name for Egypt during Muhammad's time was Qubt. Even today the Christians of the region are called *Coptic* from the word Qubti. This ruler called Firawn was an overlord of *misr* and its surrounding territories and wielded great power and authority in the area. See verse and footnote 10:58.

[50] **Pardon/overlook:** to forgive, to be clement. (Arabic: *afa*. Root F'W. Derivatives: *afuw, yafu, u'fu, ufiya, afw, afi*). It can also mean forgiveness or to eradicate, in the sense to overlook or erase someone's faults, an excess, depending on the context of the verse. There are 35 occurrences of this word. See verses and footnotes: 2:58; 2:109; 2:178; 2:237; 2:286; 3:134; 3:152; 4:149; 5:101; 7:95; 7:199; 22:60; 28:16; 42:25; 42:30-34; 42:40; 64:14. See verses and footnotes: 2:219; 58:2.

You shall kill your ego. This is better for you in the sight of your Creator." He did redeem you. He is the Redeemer, Most Merciful.
[2:55] Recall that you said, "O Moses, we will not believe unless we see God physically." Consequently, you were stunned by lightning, as you looked.
[2:56] We then revived you, after you became lifeless, that you may be appreciative.
[2:57] We shaded you with clouds and sent down to you manna and quails: "Eat from the good things We provided for you." They did not hurt Us by rebelling, they only hurt their own Self.

[2:58] Recall that We said, "Enter this town, where you will find as many provisions as you like. Just enter the gate humbly in submission and speak to people amicably. We will then protect you from your faults and increase the reward for those who do good."[51]
[2:59] But the transgressors distorted the commands given to them. Consequently, We sent down upon the wrongdoers condemnation from the sky, due to their wickedness.
[2:60] Recall that Moses sought water for his people. We said, "Set forth your aims at the rock with your staff from where twelve springs gush out." The members of each tribe knew their own source of water. Eat and drink from God's provisions and do not roam the earth disgracefully.[52]
[2:61] Recall that you said, "O Moses, We can no longer tolerate one kind of food. Call upon your God to produce for us such earthly crops as beans, cucumbers, garlic, lentils and onions." He said, "Do you wish to substitute that which is inferior in place of something which is good? Go down to the town, where you can find what you asked for." They incurred condemnation, humiliation and disgrace and brought upon themselves wrath from God. This

[51] **Protect/Protector:** (Arabic: *ghafur.* Root GH'F'R. Derivatives: *maghfirah, maghfir*). Except in rare occasions, (see verse 2:52 and footnote) the Quran negates the concept of unconditional forgiveness. Every action, according to the Law of Requital, has a logical outcome and there can be no forgiveness. Free will means freedom of choice, but once the choice is made there is no control of the consequences of that choice. People walk into the future they create. *Maghfir* means to protect and provide a process of reparation and indeed protection from further damage. Prevention is better than a cure, so individuals must protect themselves by strengthening their Self. This guidance provides the means for doing just that. Proper compliance with God's laws gives sufficient strength to resist destructive forces and if a person should fall into error, the remedy would lie in good conduct to recuperate and strengthen his personality and save him from lasting harm. This is *maghfirah:* protection. See verses and footnotes 2:52; 28:16; 4:43; 22:60; 58:2.

[52] **This was a starting point** for a community and they 'set forth' (*idrib)* their aspirations at the rock: with food, water and God's guidance to direct them, they were motivated. **Set forth/cite/advance:** (Arabic: *daraba.* Root D'R'B. Derivative: *idrib, yadribuna, yadribu, wayadribu*). See verses 4:34; 13:17; 14:24-25; 16:75-76; 24:35; 30:28; 36:78; 39:29; 43:17; 47:27; 66:10-11. *Daraba* is often mistakenly translated as 'to beat or to strike, but 'to strike' is *urkud*. See verse 38:42.

is because they rejected God's guidance and killed the messengers unjustly. This is because they disobeyed and transgressed.[53]
[2:62] Surely, those who believe, those who are the Jews, the Nazarene and the Sabians,[54] anyone who believes in God and accountability to Him and leads a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Sustainer. They have nothing to fear nor will they grieve.
[2:63] We made a covenant with you, as We raised Mount Sinai above you: "You shall uphold strongly what We have given you and remember Our decrees, that you may become respected."
[2:64] But you turned away thereafter and if it were not for God's favour towards you and His mercy, you would have been doomed.
[2:65] You have known about those among you who desecrated Our decrees, We said to them, "Be you as despicable like apes."
[2:66] We set them up as an example for their generation, as well as subsequent generations and an enlightenment for those who do good.

THE SACRIFICE OF A HEIFER

[2:67] Moses said to his people, "God commands you to sacrifice a heifer." They said, "Are you mocking us?" He said, "God forbid, that I should behave like the ignorant ones."
[2:68] They said, "Call upon your God to show us which one." He said, "He says that it is a heifer that is neither too old, nor too young, of an intermediate age. Now, carry out what you are commanded to do."
[2:69] They said, "Call upon your God to show us her colour." He said, "He says that it is a yellow heifer, bright coloured and pleases the beholders."
[2:70] They said, "Call upon your God to show us which one. The heifers look alike to us and, God willing, we will be guided."
[2:71] He said, "He says that it is a heifer that was never humiliated in ploughing the land or watering the crops, free from any blemish." They said, "Now you have brought the truth." They finally sacrificed her, after much reluctance.

[2:72] You encountered an unconscious individual, then disputed among yourselves. God was to expose what you tried to conceal.
[2:73] We said, "Advance towards the victim with part of the heifer." That is when God revived the victim back to life and showed you His signs, that you may understand.
[2:74] Despite this, your hearts hardened like rocks or even harder. For there are rocks from which rivers gush out. Others crack and release gentle

[53] **Town:** a market place, trade station, citadel. (Arabic: *misr*). Misr, as this usage shows, is a common noun, a market place or trade station and not a name for ancient Egypt, which was then known as Qubt. See verses: 10:87; 12:21; 12:99; 28:15; 43:51. See footnote to verse 12:111.
[54] **These are** characteristics, not ethnic groups. For example, the nassara, were Christ's helpers.

streams and other rocks crumble, impressed by God's law. God is never unaware of anything you do.

[2:75] Do you expect them to believe as you do, when some of them hear the word of God, then maliciously distort it, despite full understanding of it?
[2:76] And when they meet the believers, they say, "We believe," but when they get together with each other, they say, "Do not let the believers be enlightened with God's revelation, lest it provides them with support for their challenges concerning your God. Do you not understand?"[55]
[2:77] Do they not know that God knows everything they conceal and everything they declare?
[2:78] Among them are the gentiles who do not know the scripture, except through hearsay, then they conjecture about it.[56]
[2:79] Therefore, misery to those who distort the scripture with their own hands, then say, "This is what God has revealed," seeking a cheap material gain. Misery to them for such distortion and misery to them for their illicit gains.

[2:80] Some have said, "Hell will not touch us, except for a limited number of days." Say[57], "Have you taken such a pledge from God - God never breaks His promise - or are you saying about God what you do not know?"
[2:81] Indeed, those who earn through evil and become surrounded by their wrongdoing live in a hell of their own making and they abide in it forever.
[2:82] As for those who believe and lead a righteous life, they will dwell in a place of peace and tranquillity, there they live forever.

[2:83] We made a covenant with the Children of Israel: "You shall not serve any other to rank with God. You shall honour your parents and give due regard to your relatives, the orphans and the poor. You shall treat all people

[55] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J. Derivatives: *hajja, hijjaj, hujjaj, tahajja, yuhajj*). In traditional translations 'hajj' is often wrongly translated as dispute, argue or as pilgrimage. According to the root structures of the Arabic language hajj can mean 'challenge, confront, trial or test.' If the word 'hajj' means 'pilgrimage', then verse 40:47, would wrongly read: 'making a pilgrimage to the fire' instead of "confront each other in the inferno of their deeds". Other verses also negate the idea that 'hajj' means pilgrimage. See verses: 2:139, 150, 158, 189, 196-197, 258; 3:20, 61, 66, 73, 97; 4:165; 6:80, 83, 149; 8:72; 9:3, 19, 100; 22:27; 40:47; 42:16; 45:25. For 'jadal' and its derivatives meaning argue or dispute see verse 2:197

[56] **Gentile:** (Arabic: *ummy*). An individual or community unaware of true values. Used to define someone belonging to a race or religion other than your own and therefore unfamiliar with your traditions. An ethnonym commonly used to mean non-Jews. It is important to note that *ummy* or any of its derivatives do not mean illiterate. See verses 3:75; 7:157-158; 62:2.

[57] **Say**: (Arabicl: *qul*). When Muhammad, the messenger is ordered to convey a specific directive then this command 'Say' is used. All decrees following the command 'Say' are in fact actual words which he must have spoken. As the messenger is no longer around, any governing body and its administrators, following this guidance, take the role and responsibility of the messenger.

amicably. You shall observe your commitments and keep them pure." But you turned away, except a few of you and you became averse.[58]
[2:84] We made a covenant with you, that you shall not shed blood, nor shall you evict each other from your homes. You agreed and bore witness.
[2:85] Yet, here you are killing each other and evicting some people from their homes, banding against them horrendously and maliciously. Even when they surrendered, you demanded ransom from them. Evicting them was prohibited for you in the first place. Do you believe in part of this guidance and disbelieve other parts? What should be the punishment for those among you who do this, except humiliation in this life and a far worse retribution when you face the time of Reckoning? God is never unaware of anything you do.[59]
[2:86] It is they who bought this lowly life at the expense of the future. Consequently the retribution is never commuted for them nor can they be helped.
[2:87] We gave Moses the scripture and subsequent to him We sent other messengers and We gave Jesus, son of Mary profound signs and directed him with the Ruh-il-Qudus, the Sacred Energy. Is it not a fact that every time a messenger went to you with anything you disliked, your ego caused you to be arrogant? Some of them you rejected and some of them you killed.
[2:88] Some said, "We are satisfied with what we have!" Instead, it is a curse from God, as it is their rejection that shields them from believing, except for a few of them.[60]

THE QURAN CONFIRMS PREVIOUS SCRIPTURE

[2:89] When this guidance came to them from God and even though it completes with and confirms what they already have, and even though they used to predict its advent when they talked with the disbelievers, when their own expectation came to pass, they too rejected it. God's condemnation thus afflicts those who reject.
[2:90] Miserable indeed is what they traded their Self for, rejecting these revelations of God out of sheer resentment that God should bestow His grace upon whomever He chooses from among His servants. Consequently,

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[58] **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*). Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. See verse 2:43 and footnote.
[59] **Punishmen**t is the consequence of wrongdoing. This is the Law of Requital in action: when a hand is thrust into a fire it will burn. How long it takes to heal depends on the extent of the burn. In the same way each wrongful action will attract suffering according to God's ordinance, changing the human Self for better or worse, strengthening or weakening the moral fibre. A person may continually commit offences without being aware of the gradual harm that he is doing to his own Self. The morally sensitive individual can perceive this effect coming about and check himself before irretrievable damage is done.
[60] **Ruh-il-Qudus:** Sacred Energy. Ruh is the directive force *from* God, but not *of* God. See verse 4:171.

they incurred wrath upon wrath. The disbelievers have incurred a humiliating retribution.[61]
[2:91] When they are told, "You shall believe in this guidance of God," they say, "We believe only in what was sent down to us." Thus, they disbelieve in subsequent revelations, even though they know it is the truth and even though it confirms what they have. Ask them, "Why then did you kill God's messengers, if you really are believers?"
[2:92] Moses went to you with profound signs yet you worshiped the calf in his absence and you turned wicked.
[2:93] We made a promise with you, as Mount Sinai towered above you, saying, "You shall strongly uphold the commandments We have given you and so heed them." They said, "We hear, but we will not obey." Their hearts became filled with adoration for the calf, due to their rejection. Say: "Miserable indeed is what your belief dictates upon you, if you do have any belief."
[2:94] Say: "If the abode of the Hereafter is reserved only for you at God, to the exclusion of all other people, then you should long for death, if you really are truthful."
[2:95] They never long for it, because of what their hands have sent forth. God is fully aware of the wrongdoers.
[2:96] In fact, you will find them the most covetous of life, even more so than the atheists, polytheists and the hedonists. Each one of them wishes to live a thousand years. But this will not spare him any retribution, no matter how long he lives. God is seer of everything they do.
[2:97] Say: "Anyone who opposes Gabriel should know that it is Gabriel who has inspired this revelation into your heart, in accordance with God's ordinance, confirming previous scriptures and providing guidance and good news for the believers."[62]
[2:98] Anyone who opposes God and His malaika, especially Gabriel and Michael and His messengers, should know that God opposes those who reject this guidance.
[2:99] We have sent down to you clear revelations and only the wicked will reject them.
[2:100] Is it not a fact that when they make a covenant and pledge to keep it, some of them always disregard it? In fact, most of them do not believe.
[2:101] Now that a messenger from God has come to them confirming their own scripture, some followers of the old scripture disregard this book, as if they never recognised it.

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[61] **Those who** actively develop their Self give up something good for that which is greater, achieving something of a higher value than they had before. Living by Quranic values facilitates this in the best way possible. See verse 2:86.

[62] **God's Ordinance.** God's will, His laws, His decrees, His direction and commands. This is God's modus operandi. See verse and footnote 33:62.

[2:102] They pursued what the evildoers taught concerning Solomon's realm. Solomon, however, never abused his power, but the mischievous people were disbelievers. They taught people sorcery and that which was sent down through the two malaika of Babel: Harut and Marut. These two did not divulge such knowledge without pointing out: "This is a test. You shall not abuse such knowledge." But some people used it in such evil schemes as the breaking up of marriages, though they can never harm anyone against the ordinance of God. They thus learn what hurts them, not what benefits them, and they know full well that whoever practices witchcraft will have no share in the better future. Miserable indeed is what they sell their Self for, if only they knew.[63]
[2:103] If they believe and lead a righteous life that is safeguarded, the reward from God is far greater, if only they knew.

[2:104] O you who believe, do not use a perverse manner of speaking when talking about this guidance, such as the disbelievers apply, and listen with concern. The disbelievers have incurred a painful retribution.
[2:105] Neither the disbelievers among the followers of this guidance, nor the mushrikeen, those who set up authority to rank with God, wish to see any goodness come down to you from the One who sustains. However, God showers His compassion upon whomever He chooses. God possesses infinite grace.[64]
[2:106] When We supersede any decree or it becomes forgotten, We produce in its place better guidance or at least impart something of equal value. Do you not recognize the fact that God is All-powerful?[65]

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[63] **Black magic** is sorcery used for evil purposes by invoking some perceived power. Mostly this is just faith and fear in the unseen practiced by and on the ignorant. Some 'holy men' make cure-all amulets or 'tawiz', scraps of paper with religious verses supposed to be powerful spells. The practitioners of black magic are held in much awe and enjoy a high status. Many of them claim that they use it for good purposes like curing illnesses but this practice of sorcery or black magic is prohibited. It is strictly forbidden to take part in any superstitious beliefs of any kind.

[64] **Mushrikeen** plural (*mushrik:* singular). Those who commits *shirk*: treachery, treason. Traditional translators usually say *mushrikeen* means 'idol worshippers'. To translate the word 'mushrikeen' as idol-worshippers is like calling a gang of marauding Vikings a group of beach revellers. A mushriq is a person who commits ‘shirk’, the act of giving someone (or a body) authority to equal or to compete with God. People generally label polytheists, idolaters or pagans as mushriks, but this is not entirely correct. Anyone who accepts any law or value that conflicts with God’s law is a mushrik, because this is accepting the authority of others as equal lawmakers, the authority that only belongs to God. Mushriks, therefore, are also those who attempt to seize or assign a share of God’s sovereignty: this includes monarchs, dictators, legislators, leaders, politicians, priests and anyone who makes, implements or accepts laws in contradiction with God’s laws or follows an authority that does these things. Also any person, because of their rejection, threatens the peace and security of muslims, is also a mushriq. A mushriq is an enemy, a traitor and a person who commits high treason against God. See verses 2:22; 6:22; 6:114; 9:3-12; 9:36; 9:113; 26:71; 68:37; 98:1.

[65] **Abrogation:** this is not the repeal of any principles of divine law, because there is no change in the laws of God. This is guidance or disciplines that are given to communities throughout history,

[2:107] Do you not recognize the fact that God possesses the dominion of the heavens and the earth, that you have none besides God as your Sustainer who has power over all things?
[2:108] Do you wish to demand of your messenger what was demanded of Moses in the past? Anyone who chooses to reject instead of believing, has truly drifted away from the right path.[66]
[2:109] Many followers of the previous scripture would rather see you revert to disbelief, now that you have believed. This is due to jealousy on their part, after the truth has become evident to them. You shall pardon them and leave them alone until God issues His judgment. God is All-powerful.[67]
[2:110] You shall observe your commitments and keep them pure. Any good you send forth on behalf of your Self, you will find it at God. God is seer of everything you do.
[2:111] Some have said, "No one will enter Paradise except Jews or Christians." Such is their wishful thinking. Say: "Show us your proof, if you are truthful."
[2:112] Indeed, those who submit themselves absolutely to God and do good in their life will receive their recompense from God: they have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

[2:113] The Jews said, "The Christians have no basis," while the Christians said, "The Jews have no basis." Yet, both of them read their scriptures. Such are the utterances of those who possess no knowledge. God will judge them on the Day of Resurrection, regarding their disputes.
[2:114] Who is more evil than those who prevent you from the submissions of God and commemorating His name and contribute to its neglect? It is they who ought not to have a say regarding this, except fearfully. They will suffer in this life humiliation and will suffer a terrible retribution as a consequence.

[2:115] To God belongs the East and the West; wherever you go there will be the presence of God. God is all-powerful and aware of all things.
[2:116] They said, "God has begotten a son!" Never! He is much too glorified. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and the earth; all are subservient to Him.
[2:117] The Initiator of the heavens and the earth: to have anything done, He simply says to it, "Be," and it is.

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and then are annulled and replaced with new directions more suited to the period or people of the time. See verses 3:50; 33:62.

[66] **Choice** is paramount in personal development: predestination or fatalism has no place in Deen-Islam. See verses 4:44; 76:29; 90:11; 3:177; 17:81.

[67] **The previous scripture**: revelations given to messengers before Muhammad. See verse 3:3.

[2:118] Those who possess no knowledge say, "If only God could speak to us or some miracle[68] could come to us!" Others before them have expressed similar foolishness; their minds are of similar nature. We do manifest signs, but only for those who have attained certainty.
[2:119] We have sent you with the truth as a bearer of good news, as well as a warner. You are not answerable for those who incur suffering for what they do.
[2:120] Neither the Jews nor the Christians will accept you unless you follow their creed. Say: "God's guidance is the true guidance." If you acquiesce to their wishes despite the knowledge you have received, you will find no ally or supporter to help you against God.[69]
[2:121] Those who received the scripture and know it as it should be known, will believe in this. As for those who reject this guidance, they are the losers.
[2:122] O Children of Israel, remember My favours which I bestowed upon you and that I blessed you more than any other people.
[2:123] Beware of the day when no person can help another person, no ransom will be accepted, no intercession will be useful and no one can be helped.[70]

ABRAHAM: EXAMPLE FOR ALL MANKIND

[2:124] Recall that Abraham was put to the test by the one who sustains him, through certain commands and he fulfilled them. God said, "I am appointing you as a leader for all people." He asked, "And does that include my descendants?" God replied, "My promise does not include the wicked."[71]
[2:125] We have integrated the purpose of life in the System[72] as a focal point for all people and a safe sanctuary. You should aspire to the status[73]

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[68] **To pray** for a miracle is to ask that the laws of the universe be annulled on behalf of a single petitioner confessedly unworthy. There are no miracles, the ones that suspend natural laws on behalf of anybody. The Quran informs us there are signs all around us that point to the agency of God. The advances in medicine, science and technology are the real miracles. See verses 3:190 and 7:172.
[69] **Creed:** principles or belief. (Arabic: *millah.* Root M'L'L).
[70] **Intercession** is undeserved favouritism. Blessings from God are a test. See verse 2:254.
[71] **For prestige** many people claim descendancy from a prominent individual, a dominant tribe or race from the past or even the present. These factors have no influence on your status as a virtuous person. People travel, migrate or are invaded and these aspects cause children to be born of mixed marriages and savagery of war. Apart from the fact that through time it can be difficult if not impossible to retrace ancestry, many births cannot be recorded, even with good record keeping. For example children are frequently born out of wedlock or through illicit relationships by parents who may be from different races or tribes. To claim honour and privilege just by kinship of some sort does not enhance an individual's character by any degree. As this verse shows even descendent of the messengers have no special rights by the virtue of their birth connection. With God only your own righteous actions in harmony with His guidance bear any weight. See also verses 57:26-27.
[72] **System**: (Arabic: *bayta*). This is the Deen-Islam, the established (social) order, the system of God. As with any system, results can be measured and following this System gives inevitable good

of Abraham the steadfast.[74] We made it a duty for Abraham and Ismail: "You shall purify My System; the Deen-Islam, for those who enter it, those who live by it and those who humbly consent to it."
[2:126] Abraham supplicated: "My God, make this a peaceful land and provide its people with good things. Provide for those who believe in God and the Day of Accountability." God said, "I will also provide for those who disbelieve. I will let them enjoy temporarily, then commit them to the retribution of hell and a miserable end."[75]
[2:127] As Abraham raised the foundations from the System, together with Ismail they supplicated: "Our Sustainer accept this from us. You are the Hearer and aware of all things.
[2:128] "Our Sustainer, make us submitters to You and from our descendants let there be a community of submitters to You. Teach us the tenets of the System and redeem us. You are the Redeemer, Most Merciful.
[2:129] "Our Sustainer, raise among them a messenger[76] to guide them with Your revelations, teach them the guidance and the law and purify them. You are the Almighty, Most Wise."[77]
[2:130] Who would forsake the creed of Abraham as an example, except the one who is intemperate with his own Self? We have given him high regard in this world and in the future he will be among the righteous.[78]
[2:131] When the One who sustains him said, "Submit," he said, "I submit to the One who sustains the universe."

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results. In this verse 2:125, Abraham is given the task of cleansing God's System of all false beliefs and rituals and restoring conviction in the dynamic and life enhancing System of Deen-Islam. **System:** (Arabic: *bayta*), and **house** (Arabic: *buyut*). See verse and footnote 71:28.

[73] **Status**: (Arabic: *maqam*). The status of Abraham, an exemplary role model for all. See verses 17:79, 55:46, 79:40.

[74] **Steadfast/Committed**: (Arabic: *solaa.* Derivative: *muSollan* sing. *muSollin* pl. Root S'L'W). See also verses and footnotes 2:3, 70:22, 74:43, 107:5-6.

[75] **God knows** everything: all your secrets and declarations, therefore supplications are an affirmation of your own aspirations, goals and desires and God's law of attraction fulfils them. Ritual prayer, on the other hand, is at best a passive act. While it may give some self-satisfaction and a sense of a duty performed, it yields nothing constructive.

[76] **Since the messenger** to whom this guidance was first given is no longer around, it should be understood that it is this Quran: God's message and guidance, that should be followed. It also means that in the absence of the messenger, those who administer and implement this Quran should also be supported and followed. See verse and footnote 34:44.

[77] **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*). Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. See verse 2:43 and footnote.

[78] **Intemperate**: lacking in self-control, going beyond/ committing excesses, unreasonable, lacking in self-restraint. (Arabic: *safaha.* Root S'F'H. Derivatives: *safiha, safih, safha, musafiheen, musfuhan, musifh*). See verses 2:13; 2:142; 2:282; 4:5; 4:24-25; 5:3; 5:5; 6:145; 7:66; 7:67; 16:115; 72:3-4. **Drifter:** see verse 15:42.

[2:132] Moreover, Abraham exhorted his children to do the same, and as did Jacob: "O my children, God has pointed out for you this Deen-Islam; the established order, so do not die except as submitters to this Deen."[79]
[2:133] Had you witnessed Jacob on his death bed; he said to his children, "Who will you serve after I die?" They said, "We will serve your God, the God of your fathers Abraham, Ismail and Isaac: the One God. To Him we are submitters."
[2:134] Such is a community from the past. They are responsible for what they earned and you are responsible for what you earn. You are not answerable for anything they have done.
[2:135] They said, "You have to be Jewish or Christian, to be guided." Say: "We follow the principles of Abraham, he never set up any authority to rank with God and nor was he an idol worshipper."[80]

ALL GOD'S MESSENGERS EQUAL

[2:136] Say: "We believe in God and in what was revealed to us and in the guidance sent down to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the patriarchs; and in what was given to Moses and Jesus and all the messengers from their Sustainer. We make no distinction among any of them. To Him alone we are submitters."[81]
[2:137] If they believe as you do then they are guided. But if they turn away, then they are in opposition. God will spare you their opposition; He is the Hearer and aware of all things.
[2:138] Such are God's intimations and whose reminders are better than God's? To Him alone all serve.
[2:139] Say: "Do you challenge us about God when He is our Sustainer and your Sustainer? We are responsible for our deeds and you are responsible for your deeds. To Him alone we are devoted."[82]
[2:140] Do you say that Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the patriarchs were Jewish or Christian? Say: "Who knows better than God? Who is more evil than the one who conceals a testimony from God? God is never unaware of anything you do."

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[79] **Deen:** A social order and in the Quranic context Deen-Islam, the System of God, the holistic Social Order.
[80] **Religions** such as Christianity are founded on the supposed teaching of Jesus, while the Jewish religion is based on the perceived excellence of a race, and therefore chosen by God, with neither being true. Not so with Deen-Islam: the harmonious order has no founder and is for all mankind. This is why it is essential to point out that Abraham, the patriarch of the so called 'Abrahamic Religions' i.e. Judaism, Christianity and Islam, was neither a Jew nor a Christian. He was a submitter to God (Arabic: *muslim*) and wholeheartedly an advocate of Deen-Islam, the system based on God's law, not the traditions of a race or a man. See verse and footnote 2:40.
[81] **Messengers:** do not exalt one above another. 2:285; 3:84; 4:150-52.
[82] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J) See verse and footnote: 2:76.

[2:141] That was a community from the past. They are responsible for their own works and you are responsible for your own work. You are not answerable for anything they did.
[2:142] Those among the people who lacked restraint said: "Why did they change the focus of their attention?" Say: "To God belongs the East and the West; He guides to the straight and balanced path in accordance with His ordinance."[83]
[2:143] We thus made you a justly balanced community that you may serve as witnesses among your people and the messenger serves as a witness among you. We changed the direction of your focus only to distinguish those among you who readily follow the messenger from those who turn back to the ways of those who reject this guidance. It was a difficult test but not for those who are guided by God. God never puts your service to waste. God is compassionate towards all people and Most Merciful.

SANCTIONED SUBMISSIONS - THE PERMANENT VALUES

[2:144] We have seen you turning your face about the sky searching for guidance. We now assign the guidance that harmonises you. Henceforth, you shall observe the Sanctioned Submissions.[84] You shall focus on the Sanctioned Submissions wherever you may be and all of you shall focus towards them. Those who received the previous scripture know that this is the truth from the One who sustains them. God is never unaware of anything they do.
[2:145] Even if you show some followers of the previous scripture every kind of miracle, they will not follow your direction. Nor shall you follow their path. They do not even follow each others' way. If you acquiesce to their wishes, after the knowledge has come to you, you will belong with the transgressors.
[2:146] Those who received the previous scripture recognize the truth contained here as they recognize their own children. Yet some of them conceal the truth knowingly.
[2:147] This is the truth from the One who sustains you, so do not harbour any doubt.

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[83] **Lacking self-restraint:** intemperate, lacking in self-control, going beyond excesses, unreasonable. (Arabic: *safaha.* Root S'F'H). See verses 2:130.

[84] **Sanctioned Submissions**: (Arabic: *masjid-e-haram).* In English reading the words become inverted. The Permanent Values and Absolute laws as defined in the Quran. Arabic compound word from: *haram & sujud.* Root H'R'M' and S'J'D. *Sujud:* Derivatives: *masjid.* submit, consent, concede or yield. *Haram:* restricted, prohibited, sanctioned. The Sanctioned Submissions (*masjid-e-haram)* are the tenets of this guidance, the Quran, and only these tenets approved and authorised by God. Each individual is required to *submit* and *consent* to the Absolute Laws and Permanent Values *sanctioned* in the Quran by God. See verses and footnotes 5:2; 3:85; 2:187. **Focus:** centre of attention. (Arabic: *qibla.* Root Q'B'L). To focus on the Permanent Values and Absolute Laws that are the nucleus of the submissions sanctioned by God. See also verse 10:87.

[2:148] Each individual chooses his own direction to follow; you shall pursue uprightness. Wherever you may be, God will summon you all. God is All-powerful.[85]
[2:149] Wherever you go, you shall focus on the Sanctioned Submissions. This is the truth from the One who sustains you. God is never unaware of anything you do.
[2:150] Wherever you go, you shall focus on the Sanctioned Submissions; wherever you might be, you shall focus on them. Thus, people will not be able to justly challenge you. None challenge you except the transgressors among them. Do not fear them, instead fulfil your duty to Me. I will then perfect My blessings upon you that you may be guided.[86]
[2:151] Such blessings as the sending of a messenger from among you to recite Our revelations to you, purify you and convey to you the guidance and the law, and to teach you what you never knew.[87]
[2:152] You shall keep your duty to Me, that I may consider your deeds and be thankful to Me; do not be unappreciative.

COMMITMENTS OF GOD

[2:153] O you who believe, seek help through steadfastness in fulfilling your commitments. God is with those who patiently persevere.[88]
[2:154] Do not say of those who are killed in the cause of God, "They are dead." They are alive with their Sustainer, but you do not perceive.[89]
[2:155] We will surely test you through some fear, hunger and loss of money, lives and crops. Give good news to the steadfast.
[2:156] When an affliction befalls them, they say, "We belong to God and to Him we will return."
[2:157] Your Sustainer has committed[90] Himself to bestow mercy as relief from turmoil upon those who serve Him and follow His guidance.
[2:158] Indeed the spreading of noble ideals are from God's grace. Therefore, whoever is competent enough and takes the challenge of the

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[85] **Choice** is paramount in personal development: predestination or fatalism has no place in Deen-Islam. See verse 2:108.
[86] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J) See verse and footnote: 2:76.
[87] **Purify:** (Arabic: *zakaa.* Derivative: *yuZakkikum*). Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. See verse and footnote 2:43.
[88] **Patient perseverance** does not mean to sit back in self pity, despondently taking the pain and waiting for the situation to get better. It means to revitalise yourself and take on the challenges of life with renewed commitment and to make the changes you want to live with.
[89] **Martyrdom:** Mu'mins, those convinced by this guidance, are prepared to fight for a just cause and to kill or get killed, and they receive their well deserved reward from God. See verse and footnote 3:158. **Aggression** is forbidden. See verse and footnote 4:78.
[90] **Commitments:** (Arabic: *solaa*. Root S'L'W. Derivatives: *faSolaa, yuSilla* and *muSollan*). Commitments *(Solaa)* of God, the sustainer of the universe. God has ascribed on Himself the commitment to sustain the heavens and earth and everything in between. See verse and footnote 2:3 & verse 33:43; 33:56.

System should not be disparaged for being outstanding and volunteering to do virtuous works. God gives recognition to them and has full knowledge. [91]
[2:159] Those who conceal Our revelations and guidance in this book after it has been declared are condemned by God, they are condemned by all those who condemn wrongdoing.
[2:160] As for those who repent, reform and proclaim, I redeem them. I am the Redeemer, Most Merciful.[92]
[2:161] Those who disbelieve and die as disbelievers have incurred the condemnation of God, the malaika and all the righteous people on the Day of Judgment.
[2:162] Eternally they will abide in turmoil. The retribution is never commuted for them nor are they reprieved.
[2:163] Your God is the One God; there is no authority to rank with Him, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
[2:164] In the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, the ships that roam the ocean for the benefit of many people, the water that God sends down from the sky to revive dead land and to spread in it all kinds of creatures, the manipulation of the winds and the clouds that are placed between the sky and the earth. These are sufficient proofs for people who understand.

PEOPLE REALISE THEIR LOYALTY IS MISPLACED

[2:165] Yet, some people set up idols to rival the authority of God and love them as if they are God. Those who believe are foremost in fulfilling their duty to God. If only the transgressors could see themselves when they witness the retribution. They will realise then that all power belongs to God and that God's retribution is awesome.
[2:166] Those who were followed will disown those who followed them. They will see the retribution and all ties among them will be severed.
[2:167] Those who followed will say, "If we can get another chance, we will disown them, as they have disowned us now." God thus shows them the consequences of their works as nothing but remorse; they will continuously remain in a hell that they have created.

DO NOT PROHIBIT WHAT GOD HAS NOT

[2:168] O people, eat from all that is lawful and good and do not follow the steps of those who do wrong; they are your most ardent enemies.[93]

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[91] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). It is the duty of every individual to take the challenge of Deen-Islam. See verse and footnote: 2:76.
[92] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.
[93] **God** lists only four things that that are restricted as food. Excess blood means all blood except that which naturally remains in the meat. Everything that is not forbidden in the Quran and seems good, can be eaten without fear of breaking the law. Muslims have a much wider choice of food than is generally assumed. Pigs are genetically similar to human beings, and to eat pork would

[2:169] They only allure you to commit evil and vice and to say things about God that you should not say.
[2:170] When they are told, "Follow God's guidance as revealed in this book," they say, "We follow only what we found our parents doing." What if their parents are not aware of this and are not guided?
[2:171] The example of such people is that of a parrot who repeats what it hears without understanding. Deaf, dumb and blind; they do not comprehend.
[2:172] O you who believe, eat from the good things We provided for you and be thankful to God if you do serve Him alone.
[2:173] He only restricts for you the eating of animals that die of themselves, excess blood, the meat of pigs and any food consecrated to other than God. If one is forced to eat these without being malicious or deliberate, he incurs no harmful consequence. God is Protector, Most Merciful.
[2:174] Those who conceal God's revelations of this book, in exchange for a cheap material gain, consume fire into their bellies. God will not give any consideration to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them. They have incurred a painful retribution.
[2:175] It is they who chose the drifting instead of guidance and the retribution instead of protection. Consequently they will endure a hell of their own making.
[2:176] This is because God has revealed this guidance bearing the truth and those who dispute this are the most ardent opponents.

THE BENEFACTORS OF HUMANITY

[2:177] Righteousness is not about futile rituals as in the turning of your faces towards the East or the West. Righteousness is to believe in accountability to God and accept the consequences of your actions for the continuous future. It is also the managing of the malaika: the forces of nature, and to believe in the revealed guidance and to follow its decrees, accept the messengers as role models, and to be benevolent and selflessly expend your money, despite your desire to hold on to it, and become the benefactors of society; to help your relatives, the orphans, the needy, the refugees and the destitute. Also to free the captives and the slaves, to observe your commitments and keep them pure, to keep your word whenever you make a promise, and to steadfastly persevere in the face of hardship and adversity. These are the truthful; these are the righteous.[94]

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almost be like cannibalism. Do not prohibit, or accept a ruling from an imam or priest that any food that God has not made '*haram*' is forbidden. This is *'shirk'*, and the same as accepting an authority to rank with God. See verses 4:48; 6:16; 6:144; 10:59. Food: see verses 2:172-3; 3:93; 5:3-5; 5:93-96; 6:121; 6:145; 10:36; 16:115-116; 22:30; 24:61. See also 4:43; 12:49; 16:67.

[94] **This is the criteria** to be a righteous person, it is not rituals that make an individual virtuous but belief in and doing good deeds, fulfilling obligations and duties and accepting accountability for

[2:178] O you who believe, equivalence is a law decreed for you when dealing with murder, the free for the free, the slave for the slave, the female for the female. If one is pardoned by the victim's kin, an appreciative response is in order and an equitable compensation shall be paid. This is an alleviation and a mercy from the One who sustains you. Anyone who transgresses beyond this incurs a painful retribution.
[2:179] Equivalence is a life saving law for you, O you who possess intelligence, that you may be righteous.

DECREE TO WRITE A WILL

[2:180] It is decreed that before death approaches, you shall write a will for the benefit of your parents and relatives, equitably. This is a duty upon the righteous.
[2:181] If anyone alters a will he had witnessed, the retribution of altering befalls on those responsible for such changes. God is Hearer, Knower.
[2:182] If one sees gross injustice or bias on the part of a testator and takes corrective action to restore justice to the will, he commits no wrong. God is Protector, Most Merciful.[95]

SELF-RESTRAINT DECREED

[2:183] O you who believe, Self-restraint as a discipline is decreed for you, as it was decreed for those before you, so that you may become honourable and protect yourself from lasting harm.[96]

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your actions. These are in truth the harmonising factors that bring true peace and security. We may think that some of the things listed are not relevant today. However this is not true. Helping refugees is a social responsibility. There have always been refugees and migrants. People become refugees due to poverty, war and natural disasters, others simply want to migrate to a different country for work. Also it is not that long ago in history when slaves were legal and commonplace in Arabia and many other countries. However, slavery is still a flourishing trade and goes by different names, bonded labour, devadasi and human trafficking of prostitutes and some factory workers in developing countries and western states. These people still need freeing and it is a duty to help them. See verses 2:215; 58:3.

[95] **Wills that are unjust** should be overturned or amended. In Britain (Heather IIot, Hertfordshire, July 2015) and elsewhere, courts have rightly done this. The Quran decreed it many centuries ago and now British law too recognises it as justice. **For centuries** European countries practiced a common law known as primogeniture, the right of the legitimate firstborn son to inherit his parent's entire or main estate in preference to daughters, younger sons and other relatives. Although now the application of this custom is changing, the principle applied to inheritance of land as well as inherited titles and offices, notably the monarchy. Variations to the primogeniture system are now widely practiced but the equity of the Quranic decrees cannot be matched, where the writing of a fair will is a duty. In the absence of such a will the Quran's rules for inheritance are based on the roles of inheriting individuals and the social responsibility they have to look after their families. Unlike primogeniture which excludes females, the Quran makes allowances for all members of a family to inherit, whatever their gender. See verses 2:240; 4:7-14; 4:176.

[96] **Self-restraint,** Self-discipline, abstinence: (Arabic: *sawma*. Root: S'W'M. Derivatives: *yasumu, sawm, siyam, sa'im, samitun).* Restraint and measured abstinence, when practised, discipline the

[2:184] Specific days should be designated for this Self-restraint; if one is ill or on other duties, an equal number of alternative days may be substituted. Those who can show Self-restraint, but only with great difficulty, may replace with feeding one poor person for each day the discipline has been deficient. If one volunteers more righteous works, it is better. But Self-discipline is best for you, if only you knew.
[2:185] The Quran was revealed in an intense period to provide guidance for all people, with clear teachings in this statute book as the criterion. Those of you who witness such times shall undertake Self-discipline. Those who are ill or on unavoidable duties may substitute the same number for other days. God wishes for you convenience, not hardship, that you may fulfil your obligations and to exalt God for guiding you and to express your appreciation.[97]
[2:186] When My servants ask you about Me, tell them I am always near. I respond to their supplications when they call Me. All people shall respond to Me and believe in Me in order to be guided.

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latent energy within us to develop and realise the Self. Restraint can be shown by Self-discipline in many ways, including restriction or abstinence of food and drink, but not exclusively so. Only a developed Self is truly free and attains salvation. **Salvation** is the positive content of an individual's achievement. It is encapsulated in the sense of fulfilment, the feeling of realisation and the thrill of expansion. Man is endowed with a number of potentialities. By Self-discipline and conquering his ego a person develops his personality. By developing this he can reach his full stature and qualifies for still higher stages that await for him. See verses 2:184, 185 187, 196, 203; 4:92; 5:89, 95; 7:193; 19:26; 33:35; 57:10; 58:4; 63:11; 73:20. See footnotes to 57:10; 63:11; 75:40 and 3:41; 19:26.

[97] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R. Derivatives *qara'a, qari, iqra*). Mentioned in 70 verses (some of them listed here) we see that, among many other qualities, the Quran is unique and inimitable. Unlike any other book the original is protected from change. It is also fully detailed, makes things clear as well as citing all kinds of examples. The Quran is an easy reminder revealed by God who explains it to those who seek His guidance. See verses: 4:82; 5:101; 6:19; 7:204; 10:15, 37; 12:3; 13:31; 15:1, 87, 91; 16:98; 17:9, 41, 45, 46, 60, 78, 82, 88 106; 18:54; 25:30, 32; 27:1, 6, 76, 92; 28:85; 30:58; 34:31; 36:2, 69; 38:1; 39:27, 28; 41:3, 26, 44; 42:7; 43:3, 31; 47:24; 50:45; 54:17, 22, 32, 40; 55:2; 56:77; 59; 21; 75:17, 18; 84:21. **This is the verse** traditionally said to decree fasting: the ritual abstinence of food and drink during one month, the month of *Ramadhan* in the traditional religious calendar. However, when properly understood, *sawm* means undertaking a Self-discipline or Self-restraint in a manner similar to that which Mary undertook after the birth of her son, Jesus. [Verse 19:26]. The word *ramadhan* means intense or scorching heat. To name a month *'Ramadhan'* (meaning intense or hot) in a lunar calendar where the months rotate can be confusing and to alternate the months in this manner is also forbidden in the Quran. [Verse 9:37]. **Intense/hot** (Arabic: *ramadhan.* Root: R'M'Z). According to Lane's Lexicon it signifies intense heat. From this it can be seen that it means a volatile state of affairs: an intense period. Witnessing a MONTH does not make much sense, it is when you witness a situation, particularly an extreme one, that you need *sawm*, Self-discipline; the measures that we need to take, so as to extract ourselves from such a condition. Extreme circumstances call for extreme measures. Indeed, the guidance; the Quran was revealed during such a period of intense fear and turmoil.

[2:187] Permitted for you are intimate relations with your wives during the nights of your Self-restraint.[98] They are your companions and you are their companion. God knows that you used to betray yourselves and He has redeemed you and has pardoned you. Henceforth, you may be intimate with them, seeking what God has permitted for you; take pleasure from what God has prescribed, till dawn. Then eat, drink and assimilate life but be discerning and clear as the white thread is from the black thread and practice your Self-restraint till the night. And do not be intimate with your wives while you observe your exclusions, should you decide to withdraw for private Self-discipline while you cleave in submission.[99] These are the limits in God's law; you shall not transgress them. God thus clarifies His revelations for all people, that they may develop their Self.[100]

BRIBERY FORBIDDEN

[2:188] You shall not take each others' money illicitly nor shall you bribe any official to deprive others of some of their rights illicitly, while you know.

[2:189] They ask you about respectability, say: "It takes time to achieve this for any person and is underpinned by overcoming the challenges." It is worthy of honour to keep matters above board; respectability and righteousness are attained by upholding the commandments and by being straightforward. You shall observe God that you may succeed.

INSURRECTION WORSE THAN MURDER

[2:190] You may fight in the cause of God against those who fight you, but do not aggress. God does not care for the aggressors.

[2:191] You may kill those who wage war against you and you may evict them from where they evicted you. Insurrection is worse than murder. Do not fight them beyond the boundaries of the Sanctioned Submissions

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[98] **Self-discipline,** Abstain, Self-restraint: (Arabic: *sawma* Root: S'W'M). Restraint can be shown by Self-discipline in many ways, including restriction or abstinence of food and drink, but not exclusively so. See verse and footnote: 2:183.

[99] **Submission,** submit, concede, submission**.** (Arabic: *sujud*. Root: S'J'D. Derivatives: *masjid. masajid* pl.). When an individual strongly upholds this guidance, the Sanctioned Submissions, it means that he or she is in a state of submission. The word '*ma-sajid*' is generated from the root word 'sajada' and means '*to concede or accept in submission'*. This word *'masjid'* signifies the actions of the doer while observing decrees and guidance in the Quran. See verse 2:144.

[100] **The limits of God's law**: (Arabic: *Hudud.* Root: H'D'D). The principles of God's law are contained in the Quran, complete and fully detailed. While legislators are permitted to make laws to suit the needs and conditions of the time, they must remain within the limits of God's law. **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). This challenge is for you. Take a fixed number of days to give your time and money for the promotion of Deen-Islam. You must take up this challenge to make your neighbourhood, city, country and the world a place of peace and security by removing fear and turmoil from around us. You do this when you promote this Deen-Islam and implement this guidance. See verses 2:76; 2:188, 2:196-197.

unless they attack you. If they attack you, you may kill them. This is the just retribution for such disbelievers.[101]
[2:192] If they refrain then God is Protector, Most Merciful.
[2:193] You may also fight them to eliminate rebellion and to live freely according to God's Deen: His System. If they refrain, you shall not aggress; use of force is permitted only against those who create disorder.
[2:194] During the periods of restraint, aggression may be met by an equivalent response. If they attack you, you may retaliate by inflicting an equitable retribution. You shall keep your duty to God and know that God is with those who endeavour to do good.
[2:195] You shall spend in the cause of God; but do not throw yourselves with your own hands into destruction. You shall be benevolent; God cares for the benefactors of humanity.

TAKE TIME OUT TO PROMOTE THE DEEN-ISLAM

[2:196] You shall take the challenge to promote the living System in the name of God. If you are restricted in any way, you shall strive to do what you can. If you are ill or suffering from an injury you shall expiate by Self-discipline, as an act of sincerity[102] or fulfil some other form of work for the good of society. Be practical when facing the challenges for promoting the living System. Self-restraint is required for three days and then a further seven to make a ten day period to complete this. Self-sacrifice is necessary to uphold the Sanctioned Submissions especially when you are at a distance from home. You shall fulfil your duty to God and know that God is strict in enforcing retribution.[103]
[2:197] Challenges can be undertaken during some specified periods. Whoever sets out to observe a specific challenge shall refrain from intimate relations, misconduct and argument [104] throughout this demanding struggle. Whatever good you do, God is fully aware. As you prepare for this great effort, remember the best safeguard is righteousness. You shall fulfil your duty to Me; O you who possess intelligence.
[2:198] You commit no error by seeking good things from the One who sustains you. Therefore when you are in obvious unity remember God by

[101] **Insurrection** (Arabic: *fitna*) violent uprising, rebellion against the authority of God, aggressive disobedience to God's laws causing disorder and oppression. See verses 4:75-76; 8:39; 27:11.
[102] **Sincere,** true (Arabic: *sadaqa* Root S'D'Q) derivatives: *sadiq, saduqat, siddiq, saddaqa, tasaddaqa: sidq, asdaq, yusaddiqu, tasdiq, musaddiq, yatasaddaqu, tasaddaq, mutasaddiq*). There are 154 occurrences of this word and its derivatives. See verses 58:12-13.
[103] **Abstain,** Self-restraint, Self-discipline: (Arabic: *sawma* Root: S'W'M). See verses 2:183; 19:26.
[104] **Argue,** dispute, debate (Arabic: *jadal.* Root: J'D'L Derivatives: *jadal, jadala, tu-jadilka. yujadilu, jadil, jidal*). In traditional translations it is the word 'hajj' that is often wrongly translated as dispute or argue. According to the root structures of the Arabic language it is 'jadal' that means dispute or argue. See verses 4:107, 109; 6:25, 121; 7:71; 8:6; 11:32, 74; 13:13, 16:111, 125; 18:54, 56; 22:3, 8, 68; 29:46; 31:20; 40:4, 5, 35, 56, 69; 42:35, 43:58; 58:1. For hajj (challenge, confront, trial or test) see verse and footnote: 2:76; 2:197; 40:47.

observing the sanctioned decrees and remember the way He guided you. Indeed before this you were from among those who drifted.
[2:199] You shall engage in unity with the rest of the people who want to unite and ask God for protection. God is the Protector and the Most Merciful.

PEOPLE GET WHAT THEY DESERVE

[2:200] Once you complete your challenge, you shall continue to commemorate God as you commemorate your own parents, and even better. Some people say, "Our God, give us of this world," while having no share in the Hereafter.[105]
[2:201] Others say, "Our Sustainer, grant us righteousness now and righteousness in the future and spare us the retribution of misery and despair."
[2:202] Each of these will receive their share of what they have earned. God is most efficient in reckoning.

[2:203] You shall especially commemorate God with good works for a specific number of days; whoever chooses to do this for two days commits no wrong, and whoever for a longer or shorter period, commits no wrong, so long as righteousness is maintained. You shall fulfil your duty to God and know that before Him you will be gathered.

[2:204] Among some people, there are those who impress with rhetoric and even cite God as a witness as a matter of fact, while in truth they are the most ardent opponents.
[2:205] What they really do is cause corruption wherever they go, destroying properties and lives. God does not like the mischief makers.
[2:206] When they are told "Observe God's guidance", they become arrogantly indignant. Consequently their only end is the hell they create; what a miserable life.[106]
[2:207] Then there are those who dedicate their lives to serving God; God is compassionate towards those who serve Him.
[2:208] Those who believe shall embrace total submission; do not take steps towards evil works and become your own ardent enemy.
[2:209] If you relapse after the clear proofs have come to you, know that God is Almighty, Most Wise.
[2:210] Are they waiting until God Himself comes to them through some dense clouds, together with the malaika? When this happens the whole matter will be concluded and to God everything will be returned.

[105] **Commemorate:** to honour and respect by active service. Parents deserve this dignity second only to God. See verses: 2:83; 17:23.
[106] **Hell:** The Arabic word *Jahannam* come from the Hebrew 'ge-hinnom' which means the 'valley of Hinnom' a place where children used to be scarified and their bodies and their clothing were also burned . Usage of Jahannam in the Quran is a metaphor for a stagnant existence with no scope for development. See verse and footnote 2:39.

[2:211] Ask the Children of Israel how many profound signs We have shown to them. For those who disregard the blessings bestowed upon them by God, God is most strict in retribution.
[2:212] To the disbelievers this worldly life seems good to them in their eyes, and they ridicule those who believe. However, the righteous will be far above them on the Day of Reckoning. God gifts his blessings without limits according to His ordinance.

[2:213] All of mankind used to be one community when God sent His envoys as bearers of good news, as well as warners. He sent down with them the guidance bearing the truth to judge among all the people in their disputes. Ironically, those who received the guidance were the ones who disputed it, despite clear proofs given to them. This is due to jealousy on their part. God guides those who believe in the truth, in accordance with His ordinance. God's ordinance attracts those who seek a straight and balanced path.[107]
[2:214] Do you expect to enter a harmonious life without being tested like those before you? They were tested with hardship and adversity and were shaken up until the messenger and those who believed with him said, "Where is God's help?" Indeed, God's support is always near.

WELFARE SPENDING BEGINS AT HOME

[2:215] They ask you about expenditure for the welfare of society: say, "Any welfare expenditure you make shall first go to your parents and then your relatives, the orphans, the poor and the refugees." Any good you do, God is fully aware.[108]
[2:216] Challenges are imposed on you, even though you dislike it. But you may dislike something which is good for you and you may like something which is bad for you. God knows while you do not know.

[107] **Envoy:** (Arabic: *nabiy.* messenger: *Rasul*). See verse and footnote 7:157.
[108]**Social Welfare:** it is a duty of every muslim to ensure that there is no undue suffering of people in their community. Special attention should be given first to your parents and then to your relatives, the orphans, the poor and needy and the refugees in the community. So important is looking after the vulnerable members of our society that throughout the Quran there are continuous reminders of this central responsibility. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. The Quran advocates not charity but dignity. See verses: 2:3; 2:254; 2:261-274; 3:92; 3:134; 8:3; 8:60; 13;22; 14:31; 17:23-27; 22:35; 24:22; 28:54; 32:16; 34:39; 35:29; 36:47; 42:23; 42:38. See also 21:112. **Expend.** (Arabic: *anfaq*). See verse 2.3 and footnote for words from root N'F'Q. **Refugees:** Why do people migrate? One of the reasons people migrate is on humanitarian grounds; their countries are destroyed due to war or disaster and they can't survive and they have to take refuge elsewhere. It is a duty to help such refugees but in first place no aggression or unjust wars must be waged that put people in a state making them homeless and helpless. See verses: 2:83-88, 177, 191-193; 8:39; 58:8.

INSURRECTION WORSE THAN MURDER

[2:217] They ask you about the austerity periods and the challenges that you face. Say: "Challenges are designed to develop you. However, deterring others from the path of God, disbelieving in Him and in the Sanctioned Submissions, and dissuading its people are greater sacrileges in the sight of God. Insurrection is worse than murder." They will always fight you to revert you from God's System, if they can. Those among you who revert back to their own deen and die as disbelievers have nullified their works in this life and the future. They have created an inferno of their own making where they abide forever.[109]

[2:218] Those who believe and those who take the challenge and strive in the cause of God, have deserved God's mercy. God is Protector, Most Merciful.

INTOXICANTS, FREE TIME AND ORPHANS

[2:219] They ask you about intoxicants and spare time, say: "In them there is gross harm and some benefits for the people. But their potential to cause harm is greater than their benefit." They also ask you what they should give in expenditure for the welfare of society, say, "Be clement and give the excess part of your disposable income or goods." God thus clarifies this guidance for you, that you may reflect,[110]

[2:220] upon this life and the future. And they ask you about the orphans: say: "Bringing them up as righteous individuals is the best you can do for them. If you mix their property with yours, you shall treat them as family

[109] **Revert** from God's system, Deen-Islam. (Arabic. *ridda.* Root R'D'D. Derivative: *murtadd:* revert). A revert can also be known as a renegade, one who abandons and betrays an organization, country, or set of principles. An alternative, but more pejorative name is turncoat, while in religion the term apostate is preferred. We see here there is no death penalty for those who revert to disbelief because the retribution is through the Law of Requital. See also verse 3:85; 4:137.

[110] **Intoxicants** can be anything that intoxicates, including alcohol, cannabinoids and opioids. None of these are made 'haram' or forbidden but a clear warning is given here that the harm is greater than the good. Restricted and controlled use means they can be utilised, for example, in medicine. So the instructions are: use with great care and responsibility. See verses and footnotes 4:43; 5:90; 12:36; 12:41; 12:49; 16:67; 47:15. When God restricts or forbids something He uses the word *haram.* See verses 7:33; 10:59; 16:115-116. **Extra time**: (Arabic: *maisra*). The origin of this word means 'excess time'. Verse 2:280 uses the same word to allow a debtor who is in difficulty; extra time to pay the debt. This can be any kind of extra time or additional time to do something or free time considered to be recreational. There is some good in it but it can also be harmful. For example when there is too much time on a person's hands this could lead to mischief. An English idiom aptly says 'the devil makes work for idle hands'. What this means is when someone is not busy or gainfully employed, trouble is bound to follow. See verses 5:90-91. **Social Welfare:** Give the 'excess part' is anything excess to your needs, something that will not cause you hardship if you were to share or give it away. **Excess/overlook:** (Arabic: *afa*. Root F'W). Something that is excess and can be *overlooked* and not missed. See verse and footnotes 2:52; 21:112.

members." God knows the righteous and the wicked. Had God willed, He could have imposed harsher rules upon you. God is Almighty, Most Wise.[111]

DO NOT MARRY THOSE WITH LOWER PRINCIPLES

[2:221] Do not marry those who do not believe and set up authorities to rank with God, unless they accept this guidance; a believing woman is better than the one who rejects, even if you like her. Nor shall you give your daughters in marriage to men who do not believe, unless they accept this guidance. A believing man is better than one who rejects, even if you like him. The disbelievers invite you to a life of conflict while God invites to harmony and protection, according to His guidance. He clarifies His revelations for all people that they may take heed.[112]

MENSTRUATION: A TIME OF REST

[2:222] They ask you about menstruation, say: "It is a period of rest; you shall avoid sexual intercourse with your women during this phase; do not approach them until their period has cleared. Once they are bathed and clean, you may have intercourse with them as permitted by God. God protects those who return to good works and He cares for those who are clean."

[2:223] Your women are the bearers of your seed. Thus, you may enjoy this privilege however you like, so long as you maintain righteousness. You shall fulfil your duty to God and know that you will meet Him. Give good news to the believers.

DO NOT USE GOD'S NAME TO APPEAR RIGHTEOUS

[2:224] Do not subject God's name to your casual swearing that you may appear righteous, pious or to attain credibility among your people. God is Hearer and Knower.

[2:225] God does not hold you responsible for the mere utterance of oaths; He holds you responsible for your innermost intentions. God is Protector, most Clement.

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[111] **Orphans,** one of the most vulnerable members of our society are given due rights and people are commanded to be just and fair to them. See verses 4:2-10; 33:5

[112] **Marriage** is an important institution and is defined and upheld by Quranic law. Marriage brings together communities and ensures the wellbeing of future generations in an ordered society. Not only does marriage determine inheritance rights, it also certifies children's parentage thus avoiding unintended incestuous relationships among siblings (especially between half-brother and half-sister) that can occur as a result of promiscuous relationships and multiple non-married partners. Children raised by married couples also have a better outlook than those brought up by co-habiting partners. Every child needs good role models and his or her relationship properly defined for a stable and strong personality. It is essential for both parents to have the same values. Therefore, for believers, marriage with those whose beliefs and values conflict with the Quran is not permitted. See verses and footnote 109:1-6. See also verses and footnotes 4:22-28; 33:50.

DIVORCE LAWS AND PROCEEDINGS

[2:226] Those who intend to divorce their wives shall wait four months as an interim stage. If they change their minds and reconcile during this time then God is Protector, Merciful.

[2:227] If they go through with the divorce, then God is Hearer, Knower.

[2:228] The divorced women shall wait three menstruations before re-marrying. It is not lawful for them to conceal what God creates in their wombs, if they believe in God and the Day of Accountability. In case of pregnancy, the husband's righteous obligations supersede either of their wishes but reconciliation is better. The women have rights as well as obligations but men have a higher degree of responsibility and duty. An equitable outcome should prevail. God is Almighty, Most Wise.[113]

[2:229] Divorce proceedings are to be set in stages and may be retracted up and including the second stage before completion. The divorced woman shall be allowed to live in the same home amicably or leave amicably. It is not lawful for the husband to take back anything he has given his wife. However, the couple may fear that they may transgress God's limits. If there is fear that they may transgress God's limits they commit no error if the wife willingly gives back whatever she chooses. These are God's laws; do not transgress them. Those who transgress God's laws are the unjust.

[2:230] After the divorce process completes, it is not unlawful for the husband to remarry his divorced wife, even if she has married another man who subsequently also divorces her by the due process. The first husband can then remarry her, so long as they observe God's laws. These are God's laws; He explains them for people who understand.

DO NOT MAKE DIVORCEES HOMELESS

[2:231] Throughout the divorce process you shall allow a woman, even during and after completion of her interim of three menstruations, to live in the same home amicably or let her leave amicably. Do not force her to stay against her will or as a revenge. Anyone who does this wrongs his own Self. Do not take God's guidance in vain. Remember God's blessings upon you and that He sent down to you the revealed guidance and the law to enlighten you. You shall observe God and know that God is aware of all things.

[2:232] If a woman is in the divorce process up to and including the second stage, and even if she fulfils her interim, do not prevent her from remarrying her ex-husband if they reconcile amicably. This shall be heeded

[113] **In case of pregnancy** reconciliation can and should take precedence because it is essential to establish the child's inheritance rights and give paramount consideration to the mother and child's welfare. To achieve equity, it is sometimes necessary for self-sacrifice and the fulfilment of a duty: to give up a want or a desire for the greater good. **What is equity?** See verse and footnote 10:109.

by those among you who believe in God and the Day of Accountability. This is purer for you and more righteous. God knows, while you do not know.
[2:233] Divorced mothers shall nurse their infants two full years, if the father so wishes. The father shall provide the mother's food and clothing equitably. No one shall be burdened beyond his ability. No mother must be harmed on account of her infant nor should the father be burdened financially because of his infant. If the father dies, his executor shall assume these responsibilities. If the infant's parents mutually agree to part after due consultation, they commit no error by doing so. You commit no error by hiring nursing mothers, so long as you pay them equitably. You shall fulfil your duty to God and know that God sees all that you do.

PRE-MARRIAGE INTERIMS FOR WIDOWS

[2:234] Those who die and leave wives; the widows shall wait four months and ten days before they remarry. Once they fulfil their interim, they commit no error taking part in whatever righteous matters they wish to engage in. God is fully aware of everything you do.
[2:235] You commit no wrong by declaring your interest in a woman or keeping it a secret. God knows if you wish to pay attention to whom you desire. Do not meet surreptitiously; meet privately if you have something righteous to discuss. Do not marry divorcees or widows until their interim is fulfilled. You should know that God knows your innermost thoughts and do your duty to Him. You should know that God is Protector, Clement.[114]
[2:236] You commit no error by divorcing a woman before consummating a marriage or before setting the mahr for them.[115] In this case, you shall compensate them the best within your means, the rich as he can afford and the poor as he can afford, an equitable compensation. This is a duty upon the righteous.
[2:237] If you divorce a woman before consummating the marriage but after you had agreed a fixed sum for them; the compensation shall be half of that mahr, unless they voluntarily renounce or forfeit their right, or you choose to pardon and relinquish your due right. To pardon and safeguard your integrity is closer to righteousness. You shall maintain amicable relations among yourselves. God is Seer of all that you do.
[2:238] You shall observe and secure your commitments and be temperate in your obligations and devote yourselves totally to God.

[114] **Speak to women** in a way that cannot be misconstrued. See verse and footnote: 33:53.
[115] **Mahr:** This is the groom's gift to the bride, a security in circumstances of widowhood or a means of support in case of divorce. Mahr is similar to the Germanic morgengab (the Persian equivalent is called *mahrieh*) and is an important part of a marriage. It is not the same as a traditional dowry in that it is the husband-to-be who gives the gift to the bride. However, unlike a bride price or Germanic morgengab, the gift is given directly to the bride and not to her father or guardian. Although the gift can be and often is money, it can be anything so long as it is agreed upon by both the bride and groom. See verses 2:237-242; 4:24-24; 4:127; 5:5; 33:50; 60:10-11.

[2:239] When you are anxious you should meditate; walking, riding or whichever way you can. Once your mind settles you shall reflect on God's guidance and what He teaches; the things that you never knew.

SUPPORT FOR WIDOWS AND DIVORCEES

[2:240] Those who die and leave a wife should bequeath for her in a will a minimum sustenance for a year, provided she stays within the same household. If she leaves, she commits no wrong by doing whatever she wishes, so long as righteousness is maintained. God is Almighty, Most Wise.
[2:241] The divorcees also shall be equitably provided for. This is a duty incumbent upon the righteous.
[2:242] God thus explains His revelations for you that you may understand.

[2:243] Have you noted those who fled their homes, though they were in the thousands, fearing death? God revived them from the brink of death. God showers His grace upon all people, but most people are unappreciative.
[2:244] You shall fight in the cause of God and know that God is Hearer, Knower.
[2:245] Who would lend God a loan of righteousness to have it repaid to them multiplied manifold? God is the One who provides and withholds and to Him you will be returned.

SAUL IS GIVEN COMMAND AND HE COMMITS HIS TROOPS

[2:246] Have you noted the leaders of Israel after Moses? They said to their messenger, "If you appoint a ruler to lead us, we will fight in the cause of God." He said, "Is it your intention that if fighting is decreed for you, you will not fight?" They said, "Why should we not fight in the cause of God, when we have been deprived of our homes and our children?" Yet, when fighting was decreed for them, they turned away except a few. God is aware of the transgressors.
[2:247] Their messenger said to them, "God has appointed Saul to be in command." They said, "How can he be a leader over us when we are more worthy to rule than he; he is not even rich?" He said, "God has chosen him over you and has blessed him with an abundance in wisdom and in body." God grants authority to whomever He wills. God is Bounteous and is aware of all things.
[2:248] Their messenger said to them, "The sign of his authority is that a recognised artefact will be restored to you bringing assurances from the One who sustains you with relics left by the people of Moses and the people of Aaron. It will be carried by the malaika. This should be a convincing sign for you, if you really are believers."
[2:249] When Saul committed his troops, he said, "God is putting you to the test by means of a stream. Anyone who drinks from it does not belong with

me, only those who do not taste it belong with me, unless it is a bare minimum to quench your thirst." They freely drank from it, except a few of them. When he crossed it with those who believed, they said, "Now we lack the strength to face Goliath and his troops." Those who were conscious of meeting God said, "Many a small army defeated a large army by God's leave. God is with those who steadfastly persevere."[116]
[2:250] When they faced Goliath and his troops, they supplicated, "Our Sustainer grant us steadfastness, strengthen our foothold and support us against the disbelieving people."
[2:251] They defeated them by God's leave and David killed Goliath. God gave him authority, the law and gave him His guidance. If it were not for God's support of some people against others, there would be chaos on earth. But God bestows His grace upon mankind.
[2:252] These are God's revelations. We recite them through you, truthfully, for you are one of the messengers.

GOD'S HONOURABLE MESSENGERS

[2:253] These messengers, We honoured some of them more than others. For example, God spoke to one and We raised some of them to higher ranks. And We gave Jesus, son of Mary, profound signs and directed him with the Ruhil-Qudus,[117] the Sacred Energy. Had God willed, their followers would not have fought with each other after the clear proofs had come to them. Instead, they disputed among themselves; some of them believed and some disbelieved. Had God willed, they would not have fought. Everything is in accordance with God's ordinance.

SPEND ON SOCIAL WELFARE

[2:254] O you who believe, you shall spend[118] some of your disposable income for the good of social welfare from the provisions We have given to you, before a day comes where there is no trade, no nepotism and no intercession. Those who reject God's guidance are the unjust.[119]

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[116] **Commitment:** (Arabic: *solaa*) of Saul who made himself and his troops obligated to undergo the test. See footnote to verse 2:3.
[117] **Ruh-il-Qudus:** Sacred Energy. Ruh is the directive force *from* God, but not *of* God. See verse 4:171.
[118] **Social Welfare** for those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See 2:215 and footnote.
[119] **Intercession** is undeserved favouritism. This is where criminals can ask influential people, in this case Muhammad, a messenger of God, on the 'day of judgement' to intercede and ask God for absolution and forgiveness to avoid the penalties for their ill deeds. However, in reality this is not so and no intercession is accepted by God. What you plant, so must you reap. The Quran mentions *shafa'at*, looking after each others' interest. In an ordered society that follows the Deen-Islam, every individual should be a 'shafeeh' – someone who is aware of the affect of their actions on other people's affairs and interests and therefore acts in a positive manner. There will be no *shafeeh* to look after the interests of the wrongdoers - simply because it is a mistake to support

[2:255] The One God: there is no other sovereign authority to rank with Him, the Living, the Eternal. Never a moment of unawareness or slumber overtakes Him. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth. Is there any intercession[120] with Him except that which coincides with His laws? He knows their past and their future. No one attains any knowledge except according to His ordinance. His dominion encompasses the heavens and the earth and ruling them never burdens Him. He is the Most High, the Great.

NO COMPULSION TO FOLLOW DEEN-ISLAM

[2:256] There shall be no compulsion in following this deen; the established Order, the right way is now distinct from the wrong path. Anyone who denounces evil works and believes in God has grasped the strongest bond; one that never breaks. God is the Hearer and the One aware of all things.[121]

[2:257] God is the Sustainer of those who believe in this guidance; He leads them out of darkness into the light. As for those who disbelieve, their lawmakers are the authorities whom they serve; they lead them out of the light into a darkness, these are the dwellers of a hell of their own making; they abide in it now and forever.[122]

ABRAHAM'S CHALLENGE AND GOD'S ORDINANCE

[2:258] Have you noted the one who challenged[123] Abraham about his Sustainer, though God had granted him authority to rule? Abraham said, "My Sustainer grants life and death." He said, "I grant life and death." Abraham said, "God brings the sun from the East, can you bring it from the West?" The disbeliever was confounded. God does not guide the wicked

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the corrupt. See verses 2:48, 2:123, 2:254, 2:255, 9:80; 10;18, 20:109, 21:25-29, 34:23, 39:44, 43:86, 74:48.

[120] **When a person's prayer** appears to be answered it is often assumed that intercession has worked, when in fact it was no more than an event in accordance with God's ordinance.

[121] **Freedom of belief:** While there is no compulsion to believe in Deen-Islam, those who go against God's law will face the consequences - just as an individual suffers burning when his hand is thrust into a fire, whether willingly or unwillingly. Similarly lesser laws also have to be applied. For example currently, even though there is freedom of belief in the UK, no one can walk while naked from Land's End to John O'Groats without being challenged by the law. Stephen Gough tried and spent much of his time in jail for his attempts to assert his perceived rights. Also once you live in a country you effectively agree to abide by its laws. See verse 3:85; 3:95.

[122] **To set up and follow** any authority or any lawmaker to equal God is the most heinous crime of high treason. To accept any law, custom or tradition that conflicts with the Quran is therefore a extremely serious offence.

[123] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). The challenge faced by Abraham when someone confronted him. See verse and footnote: 2:76.

[2:259] Consider the one who passed by a deserted place and wondered, "How can God revive this after it has become lifeless?" God then put him to death for a hundred years, then resurrected him. He said, "How long have you been here?" He said, "I have been here a day or part of the day." He said, "No, you have been here a hundred years. Yet, look at your food and drink; they did not spoil. Look at your donkey, We thus render you as a lesson for mankind. Now, note how We constructed the bones then covered them with flesh." When he realised what had happened, he said, "Now I know that God is in full control."[124]
[2:260] Abraham also said, "My God, show me how You revive the dead." He said, "Do you not believe?" He said, "Yes, but I wish to reassure my heart." He said, "Take four birds, apparently lifeless, place each bird on top of a hill, then call them to you. They will come to you immediately. You should know that God is Almighty, Most Wise."[125]

WEALTH GROWS AND MULTIPLIES WHEN SHARED

[2:261] The example of those who spend their money for the good of social welfare, in the cause of God, is that of a seed that produces seven spikes with a hundred grains in each spike. God multiplies this many fold according to His ordinance. God is Bounteous and Knower of all things.[126]
[2:262] Those who spend their money in the cause of God, then do not follow their expenditure with reproach or insult will receive their recompense from the One who sustains them; they have nothing to fear nor will they grieve.
[2:263] Kind words and sincerity are better than offence that is caused by insult. God is Bountiful and Clement. [127]
[2:264] O you who believe do not nullify your sincere works by inflicting rebuke and abuse like one who spends his money to show off, while disbelieving in God and the Day of Accountability. His example is like a rock

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[124] **This amazing** event shows how life is suspended, in accordance with God's ordinance. But is it so unbelievable? Only a few hundred years ago no would have believed that it will be commonplace for food to be kept fresh and edible for years, but now we know this to be an everyday fact of life. Most homes have freezers, and food is also kept on an industrial scale for long periods to be used by consumers as fresh. For example fruit is stored in oxygen-free sealed warehouses reduces the metabolism and stops the ripening process. When air is reintroduced with 20% oxygen, the fruit begins to ripen. Considering this, it would be also possible for God to create an environment, within His laws, where life is suspended for a long period. God has control over all things.

[125] **Only God can give life to the dead.** However, here God provides an allegory of a call to motivate 'dead' individuals, who while *alive* are in fact *dead* for all intents and purposes until they become aware of life's true meaning. No one needs to be hopeless, all can be inspired to revive themselves, and yes, and even messengers need reassurance. See verses 3:7; 7:142-144.

[126] **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verse: 2:215.

[127] **God advocates tolerance** and understanding is at all times. By applying God's guidance individuals can excel in being good examples. See verse 2:215 and footnote.

covered with a thin layer of soil ready to germinate seeds; as soon as heavy rain falls it washes off the soil, leaving it a useless rock. They gain nothing from their efforts. God does not guide disbelieving people.
[2:265] The example of those who give their money seeking God's pleasure, out of sincere conviction is that of cultured land on high fertile soil; when heavy rain falls it gives twice as much crop. If heavy rain is not available a shower will suffice. God is Seer of all that you do.
[2:266] Do any of you wish to own a garden of palm trees and grapes, with flowing streams and generous crops, then as he grows feeble and old and while his children are still dependent on him, a disaster strikes and destroys his garden? God thus clarifies the revelations for you, that you may reflect.

WELFARE EXPENDITURE - SEEK QUALITY

[2:267] O you who believe you shall spend for the good of social welfare of your community from the good things you possess and from what We have produced for you from the earth. Do not pick out the inferior to give away when you yourselves would not accept it unless your eyes are closed. You should know that God is Bountiful, Praiseworthy.
[2:268] The promises of the evil ones result in poverty and they entice you to commit evil while God provides for you protection from his grace. God is Bounteous and aware of all things.
[2:269] He bestows wisdom upon whomever He chooses and whoever attains wisdom has attained a great bounty. Only those who possess intelligence take heed.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC WELFARE SPENDING

[2:270] Any expenditure you make for the good of social welfare or a pledge you fulfil, God is fully aware thereof. As for those who do wrong, they will have no helpers.
[2:271] If you declare or make public your sincerity it is still good. But if you are modest and work anonymously for those in need, it is far better for you and remits more of your wrongdoings. God is fully aware of everything you do.
[2:272] You are not responsible for guiding anyone. God is the One who guides whoever seeks guidance. Any expenditure you make for the good of social welfare is ultimately for your own good. This welfare expenditure shall be for the cause of God and will be repaid to you without the least injustice.

WELFARE SPENDING HONOURS PEOPLE

[2:273] Any goodwill expenditure shall go to those who are suffering in the cause of God and are persecuted for their belief. To the ignorant they may seem wealthy due to their honourable character. But you can recognize them by certain signs; they never harass people by begging. Whatever social welfare expenditure you make, God is fully aware.
[2:274] Those who commit financial expenditure for the welfare of society night and day, publicly and privately, receive their recompense from God; they will have nothing to fear nor will they grieve.

PROFITEERING CONDEMNED AND PROHIBITED

[2:275] Those who benefit from profiteering are the same as those driven by evil. This is because they claim that profiteering is the same as profit from fair trade. However, God permits fair trade and prohibits profiteering. Thus, whoever heeds this commandment from the One who sustains him and refrains from profiteering and economic oppression may keep his past earnings; his judgment rests with God. As for those who persist in usury and profiteering, they make their own life as a hell wherein they abide forever.[128]
[2:276] God condemns profiteering but approves sincere acts of social welfare expenditure. God dislikes those who are corrupt and rejecters of this guidance.
[2:277] Those who believe, lead a righteous life and observe their commitments and keep them pure, receive their recompense from God; they will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.[129]

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[128] **Profiteering/Usury:** (Arabic. *Riba.* Root R'B'W). Profit and profiteering: There is a vast difference between the two. One is legitimate earnings for materials, labour, time, effort etc. and the latter is usurious and an economic oppression, unethical earnings greatly manipulated at times of need and stress. Economic oppression and economic coercion is prevalent in financial industries and international state-backed monetary organisations, such as banking and insurance, and also the practice is rife among landowners, especially in developing countries. They are known to 'buy' families to work on land for a disproportionate number of years in exchange for a paltry amount of money upfront, usually to pay off a previous debt, possibly to another landowner. Short term lending at exorbitant rates is another way of fleecing the already impoverished. This is widespread in all societies operated by 'loan sharks' both legal and illegal. While the illegal ones operate in the back streets, the legitimate businesses - legitimate in states that are not governed by Deen-Islam - operate openly within the law offering short term money repayable at excruciatingly high rates of interest. This ensures a lifetime of misery and servitude for the desperately poor. Usury is therefore not legitimate interest on financial transactions but exorbitant profit earned by oppression and coercion, whether practiced by small-time crooks, international organisations or governments around the world. State bodies set up to regulate are often toothless and spineless and therefore ineffective. The Quran states the principle of equitable trading standards as law. They are decreed here for the first time in history as a permanent written law. See also 2:278; 3:130; 4:161; 6:152; 7:85; 17:35; 11:85; 26:181; 30:39.
[129] **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*. from the root Z'K'W*).* See verse. See verse 2:43 and footnote.

[2:278] O you who believe, you shall keep your duty to God and refrain from all kinds of profiteering and usury, if you are believers.
[2:279] If you do not, then expect a war from God and those who uphold His message. But if you repent you may keep your previous earnings. Do not craft discord to inflict injustice, and discord will not torment you.[130]
[2:280] If the debtor is in difficulty, then wait for an easier time. If you do this with sincerity, it will be better for you, if you only knew.[131]
[2:281] Beware of the day when you are returned to God and every Self is paid for everything it has earned without the least injustice.

RECORD FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

[2:282] O you who believe, when you take out a loan for any length of time you shall write it down. An impartial scribe or official shall prepare the contract. No scribe shall refuse to perform this service, according to God's teachings. He shall write the terms while the debtor dictates. He shall fulfil his duty to God, his Sustainer and never cheat. If the debtor is intemperate or cannot dictate, his guardian shall dictate equitably. Two men shall serve as witnesses; if not two men, then a man and two women, as support for each other. Thus, if one woman forgets, the other will remind her. Neither should be the wife of either the debtor or creditor; witnesses should be credible and their testimony should be acceptable to all parties concerned. It is the obligation of the witnesses to testify when called upon to do so. Do not tire of writing the details, ensuring every relevant fact is noted, including the time of repayment. This is equitable in the sight of God, assures better witnessing and eliminating any doubts you may have. Business transactions that you execute on the spot need not be recorded, but have them witnessed. No scribe or witness shall be harmed on account of his services. If you harm them, it would be wickedness on your part. You shall fulfil your duty to God and God will teach you. God is aware of all things.[132]

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[130] **It is the duty** of the appointed or elected administration to wage war to stop transactions that have any element of usury and profiteering. It is also the duty of every believer to help put a stop to this evil that creates devastation in already poverty stricken communities.
[130] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.
[131] **Throughout** the 19th. century destitute people in Western Europe unable to pay their debt were put in debtors' prison, which was similar to locked workhouses. They worked there to pay for their incarceration costs and accrued debt. The Quran. however, had decreed leniency for debtors and advocated expenditure for social welfare for the less well off centuries before this.
[132] **Why two women witnesses?** God of course understands the female psyche and has decreed accordingly. To understand the need for two women witnesses, we can look at studies that show in pregnancy hormones can cause considerable memory loss which continues after giving birth. Furthermore, not only do women prefer to do things together (to the extent of going to the public washroom in pairs or groups) but their primary roles as mothers and homemakers may mean that they are apprehensive and need support when outside alone. This is not to trivialise the matter but a fact that can be observed in women from all social groups and cultures. Of course not all

[2:283] If you are travelling and no scribe is available, a bond shall be posted to guarantee repayment. If one is trusted in this manner, he shall return the bond when due and he shall fulfil his duty to God, his Sustainer. Do not withhold any testimony by concealing what you had witnessed. Anyone who withholds a testimony does wrong. God is fully aware of everything you do.
[2:284] To God belongs everything in the heavens and the earth. Whether you declare your innermost thoughts or keep them hidden, God holds you responsible for them. He protects according to His ordinance and punishes according to His ordinance. God is All-powerful.

NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN ANY OF GOD'S MESSENGERS

[2:285] The messenger believed in what was sent down to him from God and so did the mu'mins.[133] They believe in God, His malaika, His guidance and His messengers: "We make no distinction among any of His messengers." They say, "We hear and we obey. Protect us, our Sustainer. To You is the ultimate return."[134]

A SUPPLICATION TO GOD

[2:286] God never tests a Self beyond its means of endurance: eminence is what it earns for good works and suffers regression only when it wilfully commits wrong. "O God, our Sustainer, do not condemn us if we forget or make mistakes. Our Sustainer, protect us from the wrongdoings like the ones wrought by those before us. O God, our Sustainer, shield us from the adversities that cause harm to our Self. Pardon us, protect us and have mercy on us. You are our patron, the One God. Grant us victory over those who reject this guidance."[135]

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women are adversely affected by both or either of these factors, but where this happens, two women cover the situation adequately. It should be noted that a woman's testimony outweighs her husband's if he accuses her of adultery. See verses and footnotes 24:6-8.

[133] **Muslims** do not make any distinctions between messengers. This verse shows that to hold one messenger in higher esteem than another is against God's decree. **Messengers:** do not exalt one above another. 2:135-136, 3:84; 4:150-52. **Mu'mins:** those who accept God's guidance with sincere conviction and make it a fabric of their lives. See verse 49:14.

[134] **It should be** noted that in general the Quran refers to the 'messenger' and not Muhammad by name. This is highly significant as it is the *message* he conveyed that is of paramount importance, now that Muhammad the messenger is no longer here. It should be remembered God's original and living message, the Quran, still endures. **No distinction** amongst messengers: See verses 2:136; 3:84; 4:150; 4:152.

[135] **Here is a perfect** example of a supplication to God. A supplication such as this is an ideal supplication directed to God for forgiveness and protection. It can be invoked at any time, without ritual or mediator, to strengthen resolve and regain focus when we feel weak and vulnerable. **Measure** of accountability: see verse and footnote 6:132. **Patron/benefactor:** (Arabic: *maula*). Patron means supporter, helper or the one who gives aid. The term *'maulana'* (our patron) has also been adapted as an honorific title by some sub-continent mullahs, thereby attaching the most

Sura 3: The Family of Imran (Aal-e-Imran)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[3:1] A.L.M.
[3:2] God, the One: there is no authority to rank with Him; the Living, the Eternal.
[3:3] He sent down to you this guidance, truthfully, confirming all previous scriptures and He sent down the Taurah and the Injeel[136]
[3:4] before this to guide the people, and now He sent down this statute book. Those who go against God's guidance incur severe harm. God is Almighty, the punisher of those who do wrong.
[3:5] Nothing is hidden from God, on earth or in the heavens.
[3:6] He is the One who shapes you in your mothers' wombs in harmony with His laws. There is no authority to rank with Him; the Almighty, Most Wise.

HOW THE QURAN EXPLAINS ITSELF

[3:7] He is the one who revealed this book containing law-giving verses which constitute the essence of these decrees that also include similar narratives, descriptions and explanations. Those who harbour doubts in their hearts will pursue similitudes other than this and create difficulties and confusion and construe distracting illusions. The proper interpretations are known by God and clearly understood by those well-founded in knowledge. They say, "We believe in this, all of it comes from the One who sustains us." Only those who possess intelligence will take heed.[137]

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serious connotation of making a man equal with God. The word *maulana* under strict Quranic usage is applicable to God alone. In no country, except Pakistan and India, is the title *maulana* used. Other countries use: *'shaikh'* (head), *'ustaad'* (teacher), *'imam'* (leader), or *'sayyadina'* (our leader). In the Quran, God warns against those who try to take His role as *maulana*: "...you shall observe your commitments and keep them pure and remember firmly your accountability to God. He is your benefactor, the best patron and the only true helper that you have.." See verses 6:62; 9:51; 22:78.

[136] **Taurah:** the Book of Law and guidance revealed to Moses, this is not the Old Testament in the bible. Just as the Injeel confirmed the Taurah, the Quran now too confirms and encompasses all the guidance given to previous messengers. See verses and footnotes 5:46; 62:5.

[137] **The Quran** sets out the limits of the law (Arabic: *hakama* Root: H'K'M. Deriviatives *yahkumu, uhkum, hukm, hakim*) and these same decrees are repeated, reiterated and explained. All the verses of the Quran have two fundamental aspects: firstly they are legislative and secondly they have a similitude quality. The similitude quality is the reiteration of the same law, giving a different perspective and an expansion of an explanation. All verses have these elements in some respect and measure. Throughout the Quran we see decrees and narratives often repeated but from a different viewpoint, and this is what verse 3:7 is saying. This means that the many verses about the same subject, although spread out, correlate with each other. Deluded people may look for explanations in other sources they believe are similar but the key point here is that no source other than the Quran can explain the Quran. The Quran explains itself and is self-sufficient. See verses 11:1; 39:23 & 10:38-39; 47:24. See Quran self-reference in the Prologue section.

[3:8] "Our Sustainer, let not our hearts falter now that You have guided us. Shower us with Your mercy; You are the One who grants all things.
[3:9] "Our Sustainer, You will surely hold people accountable and that is inevitable. God never breaks a promise."
[3:10] Those who disbelieve will never be helped by their money nor by their children, against God. They will be fuel for hell.
[3:11] Like Firawn's people and those before them, they rejected Our revelations and consequently God punished them for their wrongs. God is strict in enforcing retribution.
[3:12] Say to those who disbelieve, "You will be defeated then gathered in hell; what a miserable abode."

THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS BELONGS TO THE BELIEVERS

[3:13] An example has been set for you by the two armies who clashed, one army was fighting in the cause of God, while the other consisted of those who rejected the guidance. They saw with their own eyes that they were twice as many. God supports with His victory whomever He wills. This should provide an assurance for those who possess discerning insight.

[3:14] What seems good for many people are the worldly pleasures of property and wealth; such as women, many children, piles upon piles of gold and silver, trained horses, livestock and crops. These are the materials of this world. A far better future is reserved by God.
[3:15] Say: "Let me inform you of a much better future for those who lead a righteous life; reserved by their God are even better gardens watered with flowing streams, pure companions and joy in God's gifts." God is seer of all those who serve him abiding by His laws.[138]
[3:16] They say, "Our Sustainer, we have believed so protect us from our wrongdoings and spare us the agony and the consequences of a hell."
[3:17] They are steadfast in perseverance and sincerely truthful, and expend of themselves wholeheartedly, and at dawn reflect and meditate to mentally strengthen themselves for protection.

THE DECLARATION OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY
DEEN-ISLAM: THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE SOCIAL ORDER

[3:18] God bears witness that there is no authority to rank with Him and so do the malaika and those who possess knowledge, truthfully and equitably. He is the Absolute; there is no authority to rank with Him, the Almighty, Most Wise.

[138] **Seer:** one with insight and perception. (Arabic: *basar.* Root B'S'R. Derivatives: *basura, basir, bassara*). The word *nazara* (Root N'Z'R) means to behold or look or see with one's eyes. To have sight (ability to see) is nazar, to have insight - sharp penetrative acumen, is baseer. See 3:77.

[3:19] The only deen; social order approved by God is Deen-Islam, harmonising life by applying the permanent values in this guidance. Unfortunately those who have received this guidance are the ones who conflict with this despite the knowledge they have received, due to jealousy amongst themselves. For such rejecters of God's revelations, God is most strict in reckoning.[139]
[3:20] If they challenge you, then say, "I have simply submitted myself to God; I and those who follow me." You shall proclaim this to those who received the scripture as well as those who did not, "Will you submit?" If they submit, then they have been guided but if they turn away, then your sole mission is to deliver this complete message. God keeps watch over all people.[140]

[3:21] Those who have rejected God's guidance and killed the messengers unjustly and killed those who advocated justice among their people, promise them a painful retribution.
[3:22] Their works have been nullified both in this life and in the life yet to come they will have no helpers.
[3:23] Have you noted those who know only part of the scripture and when invited to uphold this guidance from God, some of them turn away in aversion?
[3:24] This is because they say, "We will not suffer any harm, except for a short while." Thus they are deluded in their deen; the way of life they have fabricated for themselves.[141]
[3:25] How will it be for them when We hold them accountable on that inevitable day? Each Self will be paid for whatever it earned without the least injustice.

THE POWER OF GOD

[3:26] Say: "Our God: possessor of all sovereignty. You grant authority to whomever You choose, You remove authority from whomever You choose. You grant dignity to whomever You choose and commit to humiliation

[139] **Deen-Islam,** the Established Social Order is the only system acceptable to God. Unrestricted freedom without laws is anarchy: fear and turmoil. Rules set you free because they create justice and harmony for all, achieved only through discipline and submission to the Permanent Values enshrined in this guidance to create peace and security. See verse 3:85.
[140] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). See verse and footnote: 2:76. The messenger's sole mission is to deliver the Quran and the Quran alone. See verses: 5:48-50; 5:92; 5:99; 6:19; 13:40; 16:35; 16:82; 24:54; 29:18; 42:48; 64:12. See verse and footnote 46:35.
[141] **The Deen-Islam** is expounded and enshrined in the Quran and Quran alone, but many people accept only a part of it and append their own innovations to make a 'deen' that may have the garb of Islam but does not have the substance. This has spawned the various sects that masquerade as Islam but in reality are perversions of the *Deenillah*, the System of God. See verses and footnotes: 3:85; 12:106; 6:159; 15:91; 30:32; 42:13-14; 42:21.

whomever You choose. In Your power are all provisions. You have power over all things.[142]
[3:27] "You merge the night into the day and merge the day into the night. You produce the living from the dead and produce the dead from the living and You provide for whomever You choose, without limits."

CHOOSE AS FRIENDS THOSE WHO SHARE YOUR VALUES

[3:28] The believers never ally themselves with those who reject this guidance in preference to the believers. Whoever does this is displaced from God's System. Exempted are those who are forced to do this to safeguard themselves from persecution. God alerts you that you shall reverence Him alone. Accountability to Him is your ultimate conclusion.
[3:29] Say: "Whether you conceal your innermost thoughts or declare them, God is fully aware of all things." He is fully aware of everything in the heavens and the earth. God is All-powerful.
[3:30] The day will come when each person will find all the good works he has sent forth to enrich the Self. As for those who worked evil, they will wish that they were far, far removed from them. God alerts you that you shall reverence Him alone, this is God's compassion towards mankind.
[3:31] Proclaim: "If you accept accountability for your actions then you should follow this guidance." God will then care for you and protect you from wrongdoing. God is Protector, Most Merciful.
[3:32] Proclaim: "You shall obey God and follow this guidance brought to you by the messenger." If they turn away, God does not care for the disbelievers.

MARY: THE EARLY DAYS

[3:33] God has chosen Adam, Noah, the family of Abraham and the family of Imran as examples for all people.
[3:34] They belong to the same progeny. God is Hearer and aware of all things.
[3:35] The wife of Imran said, "My Sustainer, I have totally dedicated my child, still in my womb, to You, so accept it from me. You are the Hearer and aware of all things."
[3:36] When she gave birth to the child she said, "My Sustainer, I have given birth to a girl." God was fully aware of what she bore: the male is not the same as the female. She said "I have named her Mary and I invoke Your protection for her and her descendants from all evil influences."

[142] **The choice** of God in any event is not an arbitrary or a capricious decision, it is based on His ordinance and equitable laws and the results are determined by His Law of Requital. God's will and law are no less than justice. See verse and footnote 33:62.

[3:37] Her Sustainer accepted her gracious offering and she brought her up under the guardianship of Zachariah. Whenever Zachariah entered her sanctuary he found provisions with her. When he asked, "Mary, where did you get this from?" She would say, "It is from God. God provides for whomever He chooses, without limits."

JOHN: AN HONOURABLE MESSENGER

[3:38] That is when Zachariah implored his Sustainer: "My Sustainer, also grant me such a good child; You are the hearer of all supplications."
[3:39] The malaika called him as he was fulfilling his commitments in the sanctuary: "God gives you good news of John; a believer in the word of God, honourable, moral and a righteous messenger."
[3:40] But he said, "How can I have a child, when I am so old and my wife is sterile?" He said, "God accomplishes whatever He ordains."
[3:41] He said, "My Sustainer, give me a sign." He said, "Your discipline should be that you will restrain yourself from speaking to anyone for three days, except through signs. Commemorate your Sustainer frequently; reflect and meditate through the night and the day."

MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS, HONOURED

[3:42] The malaika said, "O Mary, God has chosen you and purified you. He has chosen you above all the women in the world.[143]
[3:43] "O Mary, you shall serve the One who sustains you and humbly consent with those who concede to the guidance."
[3:44] This is news from the past that We reveal to you. You were not there when they drew their raffles to select Mary's guardian. You were not present when they argued with one another.
[3:45] The malaika said, "O Mary, God sends to you good news of a word from Him; he shall be known as Jesus, the messiah; the anointed one, the son of Mary. He will be admirable in this life and held in esteem in the Hereafter and one of those closest to Me.'[144]
[3:46] "He will speak to his people in childhood as well in maturity; he will be one of the righteous."
[3:47] She said, "My God, how can I have a son, when no man has touched me?" He said, "God thus creates what He wills according to His ordinance. To initiate anything, He simply commands it to 'Be' and it comes into creation.
[3:48] God will teach him the guidance and the Law and the Good News."

JESUS BEGINS TO TEACH THE GUIDANCE

[143] **This is an** exceptional honour bestowed on Mary, mother of Jesus. However, this is not an invitation to exalt her to a status of a deity and therefore worthy of worship. See verses 19:16-34.
[144] **Word from Him:** a message from Him, and that Jesus is a messenger bringing God's message - word *from* God, and not *of* God. See verse 42:13.

[3:49] As a messenger to the Children of Israel, Jesus said: "I come to you with a sign from your Sustainer; I create for you from clay the shape of a bird, then I direct it and it becomes a live bird; by God's leave. I restore sight to the blind, heal the leprous and I revive the dead; all by God's leave. I can tell you what you eat and what you store in your homes. This should be satisfactory confirmation for you, if you are believers.
[3:50] "I come to confirm the Taurah, your previous Law and I revoke certain prohibitions imposed upon you. I come to you with sufficient signs from your Sustainer. Therefore, you shall do your duty to God and obey me.
[3:51] "God is my Sustainer and your Sustainer; you shall serve Him alone. This is the right path."
[3:52] When Jesus sensed their disbelief, he said, "Who are my supporters in God's guidance?" His disciples said, "We are God's supporters; we believe in God and bear witness that we are submitters to Him."
[3:53] "Our Sustainer, we have believed in what You have sent down and we have followed the messenger; count us among the witnesses."

[3:54] The disbelievers plotted and planned. God planned too and God is the best of planners.[145]
[3:55] Then God said, "O Jesus, I am terminating your life, raising you to Me and clear you of those who reject this guidance. I will exalt those who followed you, above those who disbelieve, and on the Day of Reckoning all will be accountable for what they did. To Me is the ultimate return of all and I will judge among you regarding your disputes.
[3:56] "As for those who disbelieve, I will commit them to painful retribution in this world and in the Hereafter. They will have no helpers."
[3:57] As for those who believe and lead a righteous life He will fully recompense them. God does not care for the unjust.
[3:58] These are the revelations that We recite to you, providing a message full of wisdom.

[3:59] The example of Jesus, with God, is like that of Adam; He created him with a different constitution and commanded him to "Be" and he was created.[146]
[3:60] This is the truth from your Sustainer; so do not harbour any doubts.
[3:61] If anyone challenges you, despite the knowledge you have received, then say, "Let us summon our children and your children, our women and

[145] **Plot/ plan**: devise, scheme. (Arabic: *makara.* Root M'K'R. Derivatives: *yumkuru, makr*).
[146] **Creation:** How does God start the process? When He says 'Be' do things suddenly appear? Did a mound of clay instantly morph into Adam as God commanded it to 'Be'? **Life created from clay:** The 'clay' life emerged from was the primordial chemical-rich substance, and not the clay we see today, from it emerged the first form of 'life' that started the evolutionary process. See verse and footnote 36:82.

your women, ourselves and yourselves then let us invoke God's tribulation upon the fabricators and rejecters of truth."[147]
[3:62] Absolutely, this is the recitation of the truth. Absolutely, there is no authority to rank with the One God. Absolutely, God is the Almighty, Most Wise.
[3:63] If they turn away, then God is fully aware of those who make mischief.

ABRAHAM: NEITHER A JEW OR A CHRISTIAN

[3:64] Say: "O followers of the scriptures, let us come to a logical agreement between us and you: that we shall not serve anyone except the One God; that we never set up any authority to rank with Him, nor set up any people as our Sustainers as equals with God." If they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we submit ourselves to God's guidance."
[3:65] O followers of the scriptures, why do you argue about Abraham, when the Taurah and the Injeel were not revealed until after him? Do you not understand?
[3:66] You have made challenges about things you know; why do you challenge about things you do not know? God knows, while you do not know.
[3:67] Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian; he was a sincere submitter. He never assigned any authority to equal God.[148]
[3:68] The people most worthy of Abraham are those who followed him and this messenger and those who believe in this guidance. God is the Sustainer and guardian of the believers.

DISBELIEVERS TRY TO LEAD BELIEVERS ADRIFT

[3:69] Some followers of the scriptures wish to lead you adrift but they only lead themselves adrift, without perceiving.
[3:70] O followers of the scripture, why do you reject this guidance from God, while you bear witness that this is the truth?
[3:71] O followers of the scriptures, why do you confound the truth with falsehood and conceal the truth, knowingly?
[3:72] Some followers of the scriptures say, "Believe in what was sent down to the believers in the morning and reject it in the evening; maybe someday they will revert after this confusion.
[3:73] "And do not believe, except as those who follow our way." Say: "The true guidance is this God's guidance." If they claim that they have the same guidance or challenge you about the One God, say: "All grace is in God's

[147] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). See verse and footnote: 2:76.
[148] **It is significant** to note that Abraham was neither a Christian or a Jew, and neither the Taurah or the Injeel revealed until after him. He, and those who followed him, including Muhammad, are the ones who are good examples for righteousness - without any rites or rituals - but good works according to God's guidance. See verses and footnotes 2:40, 2:135; 3:95; 4:125; 16:123; 60:4; 62:5.

hand; He bestows it according to His ordinance." God is Bountiful and aware of all things.[149]
[3:74] His mercy diffuses according to His laws; God possesses unlimited elegance.

HONESTY - ALWAYS THE BEST POLICY

[3:75] Some followers of the scriptures can be trusted with many things and they will return everything back to you. Others among them cannot be trusted with a single coin; they will not repay you unless you keep after them. That is because they say, "We do not have to be honest when dealing with the gentiles."[150] Thus, they attribute lies to God, knowingly.
[3:76] Indeed, those who fulfil their obligations and lead a righteous life; God cares for the righteous.
[3:77] As for those who trade away God's guidance and their obligations, for a cheap price, they receive no share in the Future. God will give no consideration nor look at them on the Day of Reckoning, nor will He purify them. They have incurred a painful retribution.
[3:78] Among them are those who weave their language to imitate this scripture, that you may think it is from this guidance, when in fact it is not. They claim that it is from God, when it is not from God. Thus, they fabricate absolute lies and attribute them to God, knowingly.

DO NOT EXALT OR VENERATE MESSENGERS

[3:79] Never would a human being whom God blessed with His guidance and the law, and designated him as an envoy say to any people, "Serve me, I have authority equal to God." Instead he would say, "Devote yourselves absolutely to the one who sustains you, and follow me only according to this guidance I teach and observe all that you learn from it."
[3:80] Nor would he command you to idolize the malaika and any messengers as authorities to rival God. Would he exhort you to disbelieve after becoming submitters?
[3:81] And when God made a covenant with His envoys, saying, "I will give you the guidance and the law. Afterwards a messenger will come to consummate all guidance from God. You shall believe in him and support him." He said, "Do you agree with this and pledge to fulfil this promise?" They replied, "We agree." He said, "You have thus borne witness and I bear witness along with you."
[3:82] Thereafter, those who reject this are indeed transgressors.

[149] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). See verse and footnote: 2:76.
[150] **Gentile:** (Arabic: *ummi*) An individual or community unaware of true values. See verse 2:78.

[3:83] Are they seeking other than God's Deen; the established Order, when everything in the heavens and the earth has submitted to Him willingly and under condition of His law and to Him they will ultimately be returned?[151]

MAKE NO DIVISION AMONG GOD'S MESSENGERS

[3:84] Say: "We believe in God and in what was sent down to us and in what was sent down to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the patriarchs and in what was given to Moses, Jesus and the messengers from God, their Sustainer. We make no distinction among any of them. To Him alone we are submitters."[152]

ONLY DEEN-ISLAM APPROVED BY GOD

[3:85] Anyone who seeks to follow other than Deen-Islam as a way of life, will never be accepted by Him, and in the life yet to come he will be among the losers.[153]

[3:86] Why should God guide people who disbelieved after believing and after witnessing that the messenger brought the truth and after firm proofs have been given to them? God does not guide those who displace good with evil works.

[3:87] These people have incurred condemnation by God, the malaika and all the righteous people.

[3:88] Eternally they abide in a hell of their own making; the retribution is never commuted for them nor will they be reprieved.

[3:89] Exempted are those who repent and reform. God is Protector, Most Merciful.

BELIEF AT DEATH TOO LATE - NO TIME TO DEVELOP YOUR SELF

[3:90] Those who disbelieve after believing in this guidance then plunge deeper into disbelief, their repentance will not be accepted from them; they have really deviated.[154]

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[151] **A common** trait among people is to idolise messengers and to give them an exalted status above what God has permitted. This culminates in singing their praise, celebrating their birthday, following fabricated traditions attributed to them and treating them as intercessors, in reality idolising them and giving them a role beyond that has been designated for them. This is shirk, a treachery and a crime. See verses and footnotes 9:1-10; 12:106.

[152] **Messengers:** do not exalt one above another. 2:135-136, 285; 4:150-52.

[153] **Deen-Islam:** System, the social order of Islam. (Arabic: *deen* Root: D'Y'N'). There are many deens, but only one Deen-Islam, the *Islami Deena*, the System of God, the established social order as decreed in the Quran and Quran alone. This is the only system that creates enduring harmony and ensures the progress and welfare of mankind. This is the only system acceptable to God, following any other system is the same as committing 'shirk', setting up an authority to rank with God. See verses 3:19 & 10:100. **Renegade:** see verse 2:217.

[154] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.

[3:91] Those who disbelieve in this guidance and die as disbelievers, an earth full of gold will not be accepted from any of them, even if such a ransom were possible. They have incurred painful retribution; and they will find no helpers.
[3:92] You cannot attain honour until you spend your money for the good of social welfare from the possessions you love. Whatever you expend for the welfare of society, God is fully aware of all things.[155]

DO NOT PROHIBIT WHAT GOD HAS NOT

[3:93] All food used to be lawful for the Children of Israel until they imposed certain prohibitions on themselves before the Taurah was sent down. Say: "Bring the Taurah and read it, if you are truthful."[156]
[3:94] Those who fabricate false prohibitions after this guidance and attribute them to God are truly the wrongdoers.
[3:95] Say: "God has proclaimed the truth: You shall follow Abraham's creed; the honourable in principle, he was never the one to accept any authority to rank with God."
[3:96] This is the inimitable System established in Bacca for the conscientious and those with convictions; a sanctified beacon for all the people.
[3:97] There are clear signs confirming the status of Abraham. Anyone who enters this System, security in place of fear shall be granted. It is an incumbent duty for all mankind to take the challenge to uphold this System and find a way to endeavour to do so. As for those who reject this guidance, God is self-sufficient and above all needs.[157]
[3:98] Say: "O you who profess to follow this revelation: why do you reject this guidance from God, when God is witnessing everything you do?"
[3:99] Say: " O you who profess to follow this scripture: why do you repel from the path of God those who wish to believe and then seek to distort it, even though you are witnesses?" God is never unaware of anything you do.
[3:100] O you who believe, if you obey some of those who received the scriptures, they will revert you, after having believed in this guidance, into disbelievers.

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[155] **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verse and footnote 2:215.

[156] **Food:** Eat anything that is lawful and good. Lawful means anything that is not forbidden in the Quran, that means muslims have a much wider choice of food than is generally assumed. Don't forbid what God has not. See verse and footnote 2:168.

[157] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). The challenge is for all mankind, each individual must face the challenge to make this world a place of peace and security by removing fear and turmoil around us. We do this when we promote this Deen-Islam and implement this guidance. See verse and footnote: 2:76.

[3:101] How can you disbelieve, when these revelations of God have been revealed to you and His messenger has come to you? Whoever holds fast to God will be guided in the right path.
[3:102] O you who believe, you shall fulfil your duty to God, safeguard it and do not die except as submitters to His Deen-Islam; the System that harmonises.

BELIEVERS: UNITED THEY STAND

[3:103] You shall hold fast in unity to this guidance from God, all of you, and do not be divided. Recall God's blessings upon you, you used to be enemies and He reconciled your hearts. By His grace you became as brothers. You were at the brink of catastrophe and He saved you from this. God thus explains His revelations for you that you may be guided.
[3:104] Let there be a community of you who invite to what is good, advocate righteousness and forbid all that is evil. These are the ones who prosper.[158]
[3:105] Do not be like those who disputed and became divided, despite clear proofs that were given to them. For these have incurred a terrible retribution.
[3:106] The day will come when some faces will be bright with joy, while other faces will be dark with misery. As for those whose faces are darkened, they will be asked, "Did you not disbelieve after believing? Therefore, suffer the retribution for your disbelief."
[3:107] As for those whose faces are bright, they will rejoice in God's compassion; they abide therein forever.
[3:108] These are God's revelations, recited to you truthfully. God does not wish any hardship for any people.
[3:109] To God belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth and all things are controlled by God.

THE BEST AND THE WORST COMMUNITIES

[3:110] Those who believe and apply this guidance are the best community ever raised among mankind: you advocate that which progresses life and forbid all that is regressive and you believe in your accountability to God. If the followers of the previous scriptures believed it would be better for them. Some of them do believe, but the majority of them are corrupt.
[3:111] They can never harm you beyond insult. If they fight you, they will turn around and flee. They can never win against those who follow guidance from God.
[3:112] They shall be humiliated whenever you encounter them, unless they uphold God's covenant as well as their peace covenants with you.

[158] **Why** do bad things happen to good people? See verse and footnote 8:25.

They have incurred a wrath from God and consequently they are committed to disgrace. This is because they rejected God's guidance and killed the messengers unjustly. This is because they disobeyed and transgressed.
[3:113] They are not all the same; among the followers of the previous scripture there are those who are righteous. They seek God's guidance without surrender and they consent most willingly.
[3:114] They believe in God and the Day of Reckoning, they advocate righteousness and forbid all that is regressive and they hasten to do righteous works. These are the virtuous.[159]
[3:115] Any good they do will not go unrewarded. God is fully aware of those who do good.
[3:116] Those who disbelieve in this guidance can never be helped by their money, their children or anyone else against God's ordinance. They have incurred a hell of their own making, wherein they abide forever.
[3:117] The example of their spending in this life is like a violent wind that hits the harvest of people who have wronged themselves and wipes it out. God never wronged them; it is they who wronged their Self.

DON'T TRUST THOSE WHO REJECT YOUR VALUES

[3:118] O you who believe, do not take into confidence outsiders, who never cease to wish you harm; they even want to see you destroyed. Hatred flows out of their mouths and what they hide in their hearts is far worse. We thus clarify this guidance for you, if you understand.[160]
[3:119] Here you are caring about them, while they do not care for you and you believe in all the guidance. When they meet you they say, "We believe," but as soon as they leave, they bite their hands out of anger towards you. Say: "Die in your rage." God is fully aware of their innermost thoughts.
[3:120] When anything good comes your way they grieve and when something bad happens to you they rejoice. If you steadfastly persevere and maintain righteousness, their schemes will never hurt you. God is fully aware of everything they do.

[3:121] Recall that you were among your people when you set out to assign to the believers their positions for battle. God is Hearer and has infinite knowledge.

[159] **Why** do bad things happen to good people? See verse and footnote 8:25.
[160] **Outsiders/disbelievers** (Arabic: *kafirs*: rejecters of God's guidance) who live within the boundaries of a state operating within Deen-Islam. If they do not accept the constitution and the ideology of Deen-Islam they cannot expect to take part in the workings of its government, nor can they be relied upon in confidential and secret matters of the state, just as communities cannot rely on individuals who reject justice and truth cannot be given responsibilities that are a matter of trust.

[3:122] Two groups among you almost failed but God sustained them. In God the believers shall trust.
[3:123] God granted you victory at Badr, despite your weakness. Therefore, you shall do your duty to God and show your appreciation.
[3:124] You told the believers, "Is it not enough that your Sustainer supports you with malaika: the intense energies, in immeasurable ways?"
[3:125] Indeed, if you steadfastly persevere and maintain righteousness, then when they attack you suddenly, your Sustainer will support you with intense motivating energies, each well directed.
[3:126] God thus informs you, in order to give you good news and to assure your hearts. Victory comes only from God, the Almighty, Most Wise.
[3:127] He thus annihilates some disbelievers or neutralizes them; they always end up as frustrated losers.
[3:128] It is not up to you; He may redeem them or He may punish them for their transgressions.
[3:129] To God belongs everything in the heavens and the earth. He protects whomever He wills according to His ordinance and punishes whomever He wills according to His ordinance. God is Protector, Most Merciful.

EXPLOITATION CONDEMNED AND PROHIBITED

[3:130] O you who believe, you shall not profiteer and exploit, intensifying hardship over and over. Observe God's guidance that you may succeed.
[3:131] Do not create a hellfire that will await all those who reject this guidance.
[3:132] You shall obey God and the messenger so that you may attain mercy.[161]
[3:133] You should eagerly seek protection from lasting harm and with your Sustainer's guidance seek enduring harmony that enriches the heavens and the earth; it awaits all those who do good,
[3:134] who actively spend for the good of social welfare during the times of prosperity as well as the times of hardship. They suppress their anger and forgive people. God cares for people who spend for the welfare of society.[162]

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[161] **The messenger** is no longer here, but the message he brought is eternal, so now this means: obey God and His message, the Quran revealed to His messenger. To all effects and purposes this is exactly the same as following the messenger because this is what he conveyed. See verse and footnote 6:19. **Obey God, obey the messenger:** see footnote to verse 80:42. **Mercy:** Mercy or showing grace is not unconditional forgiveness. Mercy takes place when God provides circumstances for restoring oneself to the original condition before damage was done. Mercy is the balm on a wound and its medical property is also the mercy that heals. The time it takes to heal depends on the extent of the damage done. **Exploitation/ profiteering:** see verse 2:275.
[162] **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verses and footnotes 2:215; 21:112.

[3:135] If they lapse into wrongdoing and harm their Self they remember God and seek protection for their wrongdoing and they do not persist in wrongful actions, knowingly. Can anything protect you from lasting harm, except God's guidance?
[3:136] Their recompense is protection by the One who sustains them and lasting harmony that enriches this life and the life yet to come. This is an excellent reward deserved by all those who do good.

BENEFACTORS OF HUMANITY SUCCEED

[3:137] Examples have been set for you in past and recent history; travel the earth and see the consequences for those who reject this guidance.
[3:138] This is a declaration for all mankind; a guidance and an explanation for those who seek protection from lasting harm.
[3:139] You shall not lose heart nor shall you despair, for you are the ultimate victors, if you believe and follow this guidance.
[3:140] If you suffer adversity, the enemy also suffers similar hardship. We trial the days of success and failure among all the people. God thus distinguishes the true followers of this guidance, bestows arduous affliction and even martyrdom upon some of you. God dislikes those who displace fairness with injustice.
[3:141] God thus strengthens those who believe and humiliates those who reject this guidance.

BELIEVERS DEVELOP THEIR SELF WITH DISTINCTION

[3:142] Do you expect to enter a state of lasting harmony without God distinguishing those among you who strive and without distinguishing those who remain steadfast?
[3:143] You used to long for death before you had to face it and now you will have to face it and witness it.

MUHAMMAD SAME AS PREVIOUS MESSENGERS

[3:144] Muhammad, the praiseworthy, was no more than a messenger like the messengers before him. Should he die or get killed, would you turn back on your heels? Anyone who turns back on his heels does not hurt God in the least. God rewards those who are appreciative.[163]
[3:145] No one dies except by God's leave at a time known only to Him. Whoever seeks the vanities of this world We give him from what he desires

[163] **Muhammad:** Praiseworthy, praised one, because of exemplary character. (Arabic: *muhammadun*). This verse reads: *"The praiseworthy was no more than a messenger like the messengers before him..."* There are a total of four occurrences of the two variants of the word *'muhammadun'* and *'muhammadin'* in the Quran and both mean 'praiseworthy'. Although the word is frequently used as a proper noun, it is an adjective. It should be noted that Muhammad was not the founder of Islam. The Deen-Islam decreed in the Quran today is the same Deen-Islam decreed for Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. See verse and footnote 42:13; 47:2. Also see verse 5:75.

and whoever seeks the rewards of the future, We reward him also. We reward those who are appreciative of this life.

THE NON-DRIFTERS ARE THOSE WHO ARE STEADFAST

[3:146] Many a messenger had upright people fight in the cause of God along with him without ever wavering under pressure, nor did they hesitate or become discouraged. God cares for the steadfast.[164]
[3:147] Their only utterance was: "Our Sustainer, protect us from our wrongdoing and our transgressions. Strengthen our foothold and grant us victory over those who reject this guidance."
[3:148] Consequently, God granted them the rewards of this world and the better rewards of the coming future. God cares for those who do good.
[3:149] O you who believe in this guidance if you obey those who disbelieve, they will cause you to slip back and regress, then you will end up as losers.
[3:150] God is your Protector and He is the best supporter.

[3:151] We will throw terror into the hearts of those who disbelieved in this guidance because they set up besides God powerless authorities to rival Him. Their end is a hell of their own making; what a miserable life for those who go beyond the limits.
[3:152] During a battle God fulfilled His promise to you and you were about to defeat your opponents, by His leave. You then wavered, disputed among yourselves and disobeyed after He had shown you the way to victory that you had longed for. Also, some of you became distracted by the spoils of this world, while others were rightly concerned with the future. He then diverted you from them to test you. He has pardoned you. God showers the believers with His grace.

THE MESSENGER IGNORED IN BATTLE

[3:153] Recall that you rushed after the spoils paying no attention to anyone, even when the messenger was calling from behind you. Consequently, God substituted one misery for another to show that you should not grieve over anything you miss or agonise over any hardship you suffer. God is aware of everything you do.
[3:154] After the setback He sent down upon you peaceful slumber that pacified some of you. Others among you were selfishly concerned about themselves. They harboured thoughts about God that were not right, the same thoughts they had harboured during the days of ignorance. Thus, they said, "Is anything up to us?" Say: "Everything is up to God." They concealed inside themselves what they did not reveal to you. They said, "If

[164] **Drifter:** a person influenced by opinions outside his own mind. See verse and footnote 15:42.

it was up to us, none of us would have been slaughtered in this battle." Say: "Had you stayed in your homes, those determined to die would have crawled to their deaths." God thus puts you to the test to bring out your true convictions and to purge what is in your hearts. God is fully aware of the innermost thoughts.
[3:155] Surely, those among you who turned back the day the two armies clashed have been duped by their evil egos. This reflects some of the mischief they had committed. God has pardoned them. God is Protector, Clement.
[3:156] O you who believe, do not be like those who disbelieved in our guidance and said of their kinsmen who travelled or mobilized for war, "Had they stayed with us, they would not have died or been killed." God renders this a source of grief in their hearts. God controls life and death. God sees all that you do.
[3:157] Whether you get killed or die in the cause of God, the protection and mercy from God are far better than any wealth that they hoard.
[3:158] Whether you die or get killed, you will be summoned before God.[165]

EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL

[3:159] It was mercy from God that you became compassionate towards them. Had you been harsh and mean-hearted, they would have abandoned you. Therefore, you shall pardon them and ask for their protection and consult them before taking decisions. Once you make a decision, carry out your plan and trust in God. God supports those who trust in Him.[166]
[3:160] If God supports you, none can defeat you. And if He abandons you, who else can support you? In God the believers shall trust.
[3:161] Even the Messenger cannot take more of the spoils of war than he is entitled to. Anyone who takes more than his rightful share will have to

[165] **Martyrdom:** Verses 3:151-158 show that mu'mins are willing to kill and get killed in the cause of God. Writing about the death of the cruel and the ruthless, ex-diplomat Machiavelli observed in his book The Prince: *"...such-like deaths, which are deliberately inflicted with a resolved and desperate courage, cannot be avoided by princes, because anyone who does not fear to die can inflict them.*" To take a life requires courage, and to give your life in the cause of God is not only brave, it is the ultimate sacrifice. Those who fight to destroy the corrupt without fear of death are indeed a formidable force. However, Machiavelli also noted these are rare, this is the reason why the leaders/politicians/princes (the criminals and unscrupulous wheelers, dealers and schemers) do not need to fear them too much. Niccolò Machiavelli (d. 1527) was the Italian diplomat and author of The Prince, a handbook for politicians. See verses 2:154; 3:138-141, 169; 4:75-78; 4:101-106; 8:25, 39, 64; 9:47-54; 42:39; 57:19, and 4:94; 9:1-15; 17:33; 58:8, and Verses 8:64-68; 9:111. **Zero Tolerance:** The rejecters of this guidance should be dealt with strictly and justly at all times. See verses and footnote 4:78; 9.73.

[166] **Consensus:** decide by general agreement - but remain within the Quranic Permanent Values and Absolute laws. See verse 42:38; 49:2; 58:11; 62:9-11.

account for it on the Day of Reckoning. That is when each Self is paid for whatever it earned without the least injustice.
[3:162] Is one who pursues God's pleasure the same as one who incurs wrath from God? And his end is a hell of his own making, the most miserable refuge?
[3:163] They all occupy different ranks at God. God sees all that they do.
[3:164] God conferred a gift to the believers of this guidance by raising in their midst a messenger from among them to recite for them His revelations and to purify them and to teach them the scripture and the law. Before this they were totally adrift.
[3:165] Now that you have suffered a setback and even though you inflicted twice as much suffering upon your enemy, they said, "Why did this happen to us?" Say: "This is a consequence of your own deeds." God is All-powerful.
[3:166] What afflicted you the day the two armies clashed was in accordance with God's ordinance and to assess the believers,
[3:167] and to expose the hypocrites who were told, "Come fight in the cause of God or contribute." They said, "If we knew how to fight we would have joined you." They were closer to scepticism then than they were to conviction. They uttered with their mouths what was not in their hearts. God knows what they conceal.
[3:168] They said of their kinsmen, as they stayed behind, "Had they obeyed us they would not have been killed." Say: "Then prevent your own death, if you are truthful."[167]

DEATH DOES NOT TERMINATE LIFE

[3:169] Do not think that those who are killed in the cause of God are dead; they have evolved to an advanced situation according to the ordinance of their Sustainer and enjoy a superior life.[168]
[3:170] They are rejoicing in God's grace and they have good news for their comrades who did not die with them; that they have nothing to fear nor should they grieve.
[3:171] They have good news of God's blessings and grace and that God never fails to reward those who do good.
[3:172] For those who respond to God and the messenger who brought this guidance, despite the persecution they suffer, and maintain their good works and lead a life of good works, deserve a great reward.
[3:173] When people say to them, "Some people have mobilized against you; you should fear them." This only strengthens their convictions and they say, "God's guidance is sufficient for us; He is the best Protector."

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[167] **Hypocrites**: miserly, except that which is in their self interest. See verses 2:8; 63:1.
[168] **Martyrdom:** Mu'mins, those convinced by this guidance, are prepared to fight for a just cause: to kill or get killed, and they receive their well deserved reward from God. See verse and footnote 3:158. **Aggression** is forbidden. See verses and footnote 4:74-78.

[3:174] They have deserved God's grace and bounty. No lasting harm ever touches them for they have attained God's approval. God possesses infinite elegance.

SHAITAN INFUSES FEAR IN PEOPLE

[3:175] It is the nefarious people's desire to instil fear into those susceptible to their schemes. Do not be disturbed by them, and fulfil your duty to Me instead, if you really believe in this guidance.
[3:176] Do not be saddened by those who hasten to disbelieve in this guidance. They never damage God's authority in the least. Instead, God has decreed that they will have no share in the future. They have incurred a terrible retribution.
[3:177] Those who choose disbelief, instead of belief, do not impair God's power in the least; they only incur a painful retribution.
[3:178] Let not the disbelievers of this guidance think that We give them latitude for their own good. We only give them sufficient freedom to confirm their wickedness. A humiliating reckoning awaits them.
[3:179] God does not leave the believers in an indeterminate state but distinguishes the bad from the good. Nor does God inform you of your future but God bestows such knowledge upon whomever He chooses from among His messengers. Therefore you shall believe in the definitive accountability and the guidance brought to you by His messengers. If you believe and lead a righteous life, you will receive a great recompense.
[3:180] Let not those who withhold and hoard wealth from God's provisions think that this is good for them; it is bad for them. For they will be weighed down with their hoardings on the Day of Reckoning. God is the ultimate inheritor of all that is in the heavens and the earth. God is fully aware of everything you do.

[3:181] God heard the insult of those who said, "God is deprived, while we are prosperous." We have on record everything they said, just as We have evidence of their unwarranted slaughter of the messengers and We will command: Suffer the horror of the hell that you have made for yourselves.
[3:182] This is the consequence of your own works. God is never unjust towards any people.
[3:183] It is they who said: "God has made a promise with us that we should not believe in any messenger, unless he produces an offering that is prepared through an enflamed fire." Say: "Messengers before me have come to you with clear proofs including what you demanded. Why then did you kill them, if you are truthful?"
[3:184] If they reject you, messengers before you have been rejected, even though they brought proofs, including the Zaboor, a book with enlightening guidance.

DEATH BRINGS CHANGE

[3:185] Every Self tastes death to evolve in status and you receive your recompense in the period of Reckoning. Whoever manages even just barely to avoid regressive displacement and progress into the higher state of harmony, has achieved great success. The life of this world is no more than temporal gain.[169]

THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE

[3:186] You will certainly be tested through your money and your lives and you will hear many things from those who received the guidance and even abuse from those who set up other authorities to rival God. If you steadfastly persevere and lead a life of good works, this will prove the strength of your convictions.

[3:187] God took a promise from some of those who previously received the guidance: "You shall declare it to all mankind and never conceal it." But they disregarded it and put it behind them and sold out for a cheap price. What a miserable trade.

[3:188] Those who sing their own praises and wish to be remembered for something they have not really done, should not think that they can evade punishment. They have incurred a painful retribution.

[3:189] To God belongs absolute sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. God has power over all things.

[3:190] In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, there are signs for those who possess intelligence.[170]

[3:191] They contemplate God's System while standing, sitting and while lying on their sides and they reflect upon the construction of all the universe and say: "Our Sustainer, You did not create all this in vain. Be You glorified. Protect us from all wrongdoings and the inevitable turmoil they bring.

[3:192] "Our Sustainer, whomever You commit to a state of hell are the ones displaced by rejecting your guidance. Such transgressors have no helpers.

[3:193] "Our Sustainer, we have heard a call to conviction proclaiming: `You shall believe in the One who Sustains you.' and we have believed in your guidance. Our Sustainer, protect us from our transgressions, redeem us from our wrongdoing and let us die as those who have done good works.

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[169] **Everything** is in a state of change and we are part of an evolutionary process. The earlier part of evolution was beyond our control but now we determine the development of our Self by the choices we make.

[170] **Both verses** 3:190 and 3:191 point out the perfection of the universe, and those who possess intelligence will unfold, unravel and discover the wonders of this creation and use them for the benefit of mankind. Scientists are, of course, doing this now. See verses and footnotes 2:4; 2:118; 10:5; 10:18; 36:82; 41:53; 45:4.

[3:194] "Our Sustainer, shower us with the good things you promised us through Your messengers and do not abandon us on the Day of Reckoning. You never break a promise."

EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN

[3:195] God, their Sustainer responds: "I never fail to reward any worker among you for any work you do, be you male or female, you are equal to one another. Thus, those who take the challenge and get evicted from their homes and are persecuted because of following My guidance, and fight and get killed; I will surely remit their wrongs and admit them into a place of harmony." Such is the recompense from God. It is God who possesses the ultimate rewards.[171]

[3:196] Do not be impressed by the apparent success of those who reject this guidance.

[3:197] They only enjoy temporarily the things of life, then end up in a hell of their own making; what a miserable state.

[3:198] As for those who observe guidance from their Sustainer, they have deserved a state of harmony, where they abide forever. Such is the new life given to them by God. What God possesses is far better for those who do good.

CONSCIENTIOUS PEOPLE RECOGNISE PERMANENT VALUES

[3:199] Surely, some of those who profess to follow the previous scriptures do believe in God and in what was revealed to you and in what was revealed to them. They reverence God's guidance and they never betray their principles and sell themselves short. These will receive their recompense from their Sustainer. God is most efficient in reckoning.[172]

[3:200] O you who believe, you shall be steadfast, patiently persevere, remain united and you shall observe God's guidance that you may succeed.

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[171] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). See verses and footnote 2:258; 27:93. **Equality:** All men and women are equal before God. See verses and footnotes 10:109; 33:35.

[172] **A muslim** is an individual who is recognised by the high standards he or she maintains. *Anyone* whose beliefs and actions harmonise with the Permanent Values as found in the Quran is in fact a *muslim*, and conscientious people recognise and readily accept these optimum values. **So why believe in the Quran?** While it is true that a individual may be living a life that appears to be aligned with the Quran, it is the Quran alone that consummates the *complete* Permanent Values and Absolute Laws that harmonise with God's System (Deen-Islam) and provides them in a unique framework that an individual by his or her self may not be able to. Taking the Quran as the Criterion ensures that a full and total calibration of values can take place. With the Quran as the moral compass and an enlightening guide, each person can be sure that they can use this guidance to lead a life based on a firm foundation of optimum standards for success both in this life and the life yet to come. See verses and footnotes 3:19; 3:85; 25:30; 28:50-53.

Sura 4: The Women (Al-Nisa)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[4:1] O people, fulfil your duty to the One who sustains you; the One who created everything from one Self, a single entity, and created from it its mate, then evolved from the two many creations. You shall regard God by whom you pledge and care for your parents. God is watching over you.[173]

BE FAIR WITH ORPHANS - ENCOURAGE MARRIAGE

[4:2] You shall hand over to the orphans their rightful properties. Do not substitute the good for worthless things and do not consume their properties by mixing them with yours. This would be a gross injustice on your part.[174]

[4:3] When you deem it best for the orphans in your care, you may marry off the female orphans in twos, threes or fours. If you fear lest you become unfair to any of them, then you shall arrange marriage for only one at a time, preferably with someone already within your acquaintance. Additionally, you are thus more likely to avoid financial hardship.[175]

[4:4] All women should be given their due mahr[176] equitably, as a right. If they willingly forfeit anything and you mutually agree to it, accept it with respectability.

[4:5] Do not give to those orphans who lack self-restraint, the properties that God has entrusted with you as guardians. You shall provide for them from what you hold in trust or from your own means, and clothe them and treat them with kindness.[177]

[4:6] You shall test the orphans when they reach maturity and are responsible enough for marriage. As soon as you find them responsible enough, give them their due inheritance. Do not consume it extravagantly to diminish their entitlement before they come of age to take charge. The

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[173] **The initial** life form started from one single entity (a single cell) and from the single cell emerged many life forms that we see today, including homo sapiens, the present day human beings. See verse and footnote 36:82. See also verses 2:30; 6:135; 10:14; 27:62; 35:39.

[174] **Orphan:** an orphan is a child both of whose parents are dead or have abandoned it permanently. Only a child who has lost *both* parents is called an orphan. There is no doubt that orphans are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. This is why great care must be taken to ensure that they suffer no injustice. A loving family atmosphere is the most nourishing environment for a child to grow up in. Many verses in the Quran decree justice and goodwill to orphans. See verse and footnote 33:5.

[175] **To encourage** and arrange marriage among single, divorced or widowed marriage prospects is a responsibility for all those who are in a position to undertake it. See also verse 24:34.

[176] **Mahr:** This is the groom's gift to the bride. See verse 2:236.

[177] **Lacking in self-restraint:** unreasonable, Intemperate, lacking in self-control, going beyond excesses. (Arabic: *safaha.* Root S'F'H). See verses 2:130.

wealthy guardian shall not charge any costs for maintenance, but the needy guardian may charge equitably. When you give them their properties you shall have witnesses to show that you have discharged your responsibilities. God will certainly be the Reckoner.

INHERITANCE RIGHTS IN THE ABSENCE OF A WILL

[4:7] The men get a share of what their parents and the relatives leave behind. The women too shall get a share of what their parents and relatives leave behind. Whether it is a small or a large inheritance, due shares belong to the rightful inheritors.

[4:8] During distribution, if other relatives, orphans and needy persons are present, the inheritors shall give something to them and treat them compassionately and kindly.

[4:9] Those who are concerned about their own children, in case they leave them deprived, shall fulfil their duty to God, make a will and be equitable.

[4:10] Those who consume the orphans' wealth and properties unjustly, stoke fire into their own bellies and will suffer a state of turmoil that awaits them.

[4:11] In the absence of a will God decrees the apportions of your wealth for the benefit of your children; the male gets twice the share of a female. If the inheritors are only women, more than two, they get two-thirds of what is bequeathed. If only one daughter is left, she gets one-half. The parents of the deceased get one-sixth of the inheritance each, if the deceased also had children. If the deceased left no children and his parents are the only inheritors, the mother gets one-third. If the deceased has siblings then the mother gets one-sixth. Fulfil these conditions if no will has been left and any conditions where a will has been left, but first pay off all debts of the deceased so no loss is caused to anyone. When it comes to your parents and your children, do not cut off anyone because of ill will towards them, you do not know which of them is really the best to you and the most beneficial. Ensure you carry out all the terms of God's law. God, Most Wise, has full knowledge of all things.[178]

[178] **The basic premise of a will** is that it fulfils a benefactor's wishes. A benefactor can make a will and give his female beneficiaries less, equal or more than her male counterparts, and this is a choice any benefactor can make. However, in the absence of a will, the Quran's decrees come into force to give maximum benefit to those most likely to need it. This is just and fair. The Quran rules that the male gets twice the female share because in the most probable circumstances it is the male who has the most financial burden in looking after a wife and family and therefore needs more money. This is observable in societies around the world, it is the male that is the provider and maintainer of families, not the female. The Quran gives a fair and practical solution in the absence of a will but until recently, in English or Scottish Law, there was no compulsion to be so. In Britain and elsewhere, judges have ruled that wills that are unreasonable will be overturned or amended. This is justice that the Quran decreed many centuries ago and now British law also recognises it. See verses 2:180-182.

[4:12] You get half of what your wives leave behind, if they had no children. If they had children, you get one-fourth of what they leave. All this, where no will has been left and after paying off all legacies and debts. They get one-fourth of what you leave behind, if you had no children. If you had children, they get one-eighth of what you bequeath. All this, after fulfilling any will you had left and after paying off all debts. If the deceased man or woman was without children and leaves two siblings, male or female, each of them gets one-sixth of the inheritance. If there are more siblings, then they equally share one-third of the inheritance. All this, if no will has been left and after paying off all legacies and debts, so that no one suffers injustice. This is decreed by God. God, Most Wise, Clement, has full knowledge of all that you do.
[4:13] These are God's laws. Those who obey God and implement His guidance will have lasting peace and tranquillity which they enjoy eternally. This is the greatest triumph.
[4:14] As for the one who disobeys God and neglects His message of guidance and transgresses His laws, God will let him recede into a turmoil of his own making where he suffers forever. He has incurred a shameful retribution.

ACTS OF IMMORALITY

[4:15] The women among you who commit an act of lewdness; before accusing them you must have four witnesses against them from among your community. If they do bear witness, then you shall confine such women in their homes until they die or until God creates an exit for them.[179]
[4:16] The couple who commit sexual obscenities shall be punished. If they repent and reform you shall take no action against them. God is Redeemer, Most Merciful.

CONTRITION ON DEATH USELESS

[4:17] Repentance is acceptable by God from those who do wrong out of ignorance then repent and reform themselves. God redeems them. God, Most Wise, knows all that you do.[180]
[4:18] Not acceptable is the repentance of those who do wrong until death comes to them, then say, "Now I repent." Nor is it acceptable from those who die as rejecters of this guidance. For these We have prepared a painful retribution.

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[179] **Any act of immorality** is punishable. See verses and footnotes 17:32; 24:2-20; 24:23-26. An exit for an incarcerated woman would be gainful employment under supervision, marriage or death. The 'couple' mentioned in verse 4:16 can be a male with a female, both males or both females. **Homosexuality:** see verse and footnote 7:80.
[180] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.

[4:19] O you who believe, it is not lawful for you to inherit, against their will, what your women leave behind. You shall not force them to give up anything you had given them unless they commit proven infidelity. You shall treat them in a pleasant manner. If you loathe them, you may dislike something wherein God has placed a lot of good.[181]

DIVORCE RULES - PROHIBITED MARRIAGES & INCEST

[4:20 If you divorce your wife in order to re-marry, and you had given your first wife a generous amount, you shall not take anything back you had given her. Would you take it unfairly, cruelly and wrongfully?
[4:21] How could you take it back after you have been intimate with each other and they had accepted from you a solemn pledge?[182]

[4:22] Do not marry women who were previously married to your fathers for it is a gross offence and an abominable act. Existing marriages are exempted from this decree.
[4:23] Prohibited for you in marriage is your mother, and also prohibited for you are your daughters, your sisters, the sisters of your father, the sisters of your mother, the daughters of your brother, the daughters of your sister, your nursing mothers, the girls who were breastfed from the same woman as you, the mothers of your wives, the daughters of your wives with whom you have consummated your marriage. If the marriage has not been consummated and is annulled, you may marry the daughter. Also prohibited for you are the women who were married to your sons. Also, you shall not be married to two sisters at the same time, but do not break up existing marriages. God is Protector, Most Merciful.[183]
[4:24] Also prohibited are the women who are already married unless they escape their disbelieving husbands who are at war with you. These are God's commandments to you. All other categories are permitted for you in marriage, so long as you pay them their due mahr.[184] You shall maintain your morality by not committing any excesses or indecency. Thus, whoever you like among them, you shall pay them the mahr decreed for them. You

[181] **Infidelity:** unfaithfulness, indecency, lewdness, betrayal, disloyalty. See verse and footnote 24:4.
[182] **Solemn pledge** or contract. (Arabic: *meesaq*).
[183] **The only indication** that polygamy is allowed comes from verse 4:129 and this verse [4:23] that prohibits marriage to two sisters at the same time, the conclusion being that if one cannot be married to two sisters simultaneously then a man can be married to two women, who are not sisters, at the same time. **Incest:** the Quran decrees incest unlawful. Philconsanguineus: sexual attraction to a close blood relative. **Also forbidden is polyandry** as made clear in verse 4:24. Only married women who have escaped mushrik husbands and thus annulled their marriage can re-marry. Even in this case a compensation (reimbursement of the *mahr* payment) is due to the previous husband and must be paid where possible. See verses 2:221; 4:129; 33:50; 60:10.
[184] **Mahr:** This is the groom's gift to the bride. See verse 2:236.

commit no error by mutually agreeing to any adjustments to the mahr. God, Most Wise, knows all that you do.[185]

[4:25] Those among you who cannot afford to marry affluent believing women, may marry believing incarcerated or servant women. God knows best about your belief and you are equal to one another as far as belief is concerned. You shall obtain permission from their guardians before you marry them and pay them their due mahr equitably. They shall maintain good moral behaviour by not committing any excesses and licentious conduct. Once they are freed through marriage if they commit any lewdness or indecency, their punishment shall be half of that for women of status. Marrying a captive or slave shall be a last resort for those unable to wait. To be patient is better for you. God is Protector, Most Merciful.[186]
[4:26] God explains these things for you to guide you through past precedents and to redeem you. God is aware of all things, Most Wise.
[4:27] God wishes to redeem you, while those who pursue their perverted desires wish that you turn away from this guidance and that is a great deviation.
[4:28] God wishes to lighten your burden, for the human being is inherently vulnerable.

ILLICIT GAINS FORBIDDEN - GOOD WORKS RESCIND EVIL WORKS

[4:29] O you who believe, do not consume each others' money and properties illicitly. Only lawful and mutual transactions are permitted. You shall not harm or annihilate your Self with such illicit consumptions. God is merciful towards you with His guidance.[187]
[4:30] Those who commit these transgressions maliciously and deliberately, condemn themselves to a hell of their own making. This is easy for God to allow.
[4:31] If you refrain from committing any gross wrongdoings that are prohibited for you, We will remit from you your lapses and you will enter an honourable state of harmony.

MEN AND WOMEN - DIFFERENT YET EQUAL

[4:32] You shall not covet the intrinsic worth bestowed upon each individual by God; the men enjoy certain qualities and fruits of their labour

[185] **Committing excesses:** unreasonable and indecent behaviour, Intemperate, lacking in self-control, going beyond excesses, lacking in self-restraint. [Verses 4:24-25]. (Arabic: *safaha.* Root S'F'H). See verses 5:5; 24:4.
[186] **Excesses:** to be intemperate, lacking in self-control, going beyond/ committing excesses, lacking in self-restraint. (Arabic: *safaha.* Root S'F'H). See verse and footnote 2:130. **Adultery/ fornication:** See verse and footnote 24:4.
[187] **To merge property** may also lead to transgression. See verses and footnote 38:21-24.

and the women enjoy certain qualities and the fruits of their labour. You may implore God to shower you with His grace. God is fully aware of all things.

[4:33] For each of you, We have designated shares from the inheritance left by your parents and your relatives. Also those related to you through marriage, you shall give them their due share. God witnesses all things.

MEN AS HUSBANDS AND MAINTAINERS OF PEACE

[4:34] The men are the protectors and maintainers of women and God has endowed them with qualities that define their duty as providers. Therefore the admirable women will accede to this arrangement and protect what God commands them to preserve: their chastity, property and honour, even during their husband's absence. If you experience ill-conduct from your wife you shall first talk to her, then if she still continues in bad behaviour stop sharing the marital bed. If she still persists in impropriety then set forth for her in clear terms and say: either return to principles of integrity or our relationship is terminated. If she returns to decent behaviour and good conduct you are then not permitted to take any sanctions against her. Remember God is Most High and Supreme.[188]

MARRIAGE ARBITRATION

[4:35] If a couple fear permanent separation, you shall appoint an arbitrator from his family and an arbitrator from her family; if they decide to reconcile, God will help them harmonise. God is Knower and aware of all things.

FAMILY CARE & SOCIAL WELFARE

[4:36] You shall serve God and do not set up any authority to rank with Him. You shall care for your parents, your relatives, the orphans, the poor, the related neighbour, the unrelated neighbour, your friends and companions, the refugees that you know and your servants. God does not like the proud boasters.

[188] **Men and women** have physical, psychological and physiological differences that determine division of labour in society and are therefore complementary companions to each other and not competitors as is often wrongly portrayed. Where there is conflict in a marriage, especially a protracted one, verses 4:34-35 make clear the process: talk it through, temporary separation and possible divorce. **Set forth/ cite/ advance:** (Arabic: *daraba.* Root D'R'B). Traditionally *daraba* is wrongly translated as 'to beat' or 'strike'. See verse and footnote 2:60, and verse 38:42 for usage of 'to strike'. (Arabic: *urkud*). Women have greater rights than men if accused of adultery: see verse 24:6-8. **Are men and women equal?** See verses 3:195; 33:35. It is equity that leads to equality. See also verse and footnote 10:109; 16:97.

[4:37] The ones who are miserly also exhort other people to be mean and conceal what God has bestowed upon them from His bounties. God has prepared for those who reject this guidance a disgraceful retribution.
[4:38] They do deeds only to show off while disbelieving in God and their own reckoning. If you choose a friend who is a mischievous charlatan, that is the worst companion.
[4:39] Why do they not believe in God, the Day of Reckoning and spending for good causes, from God's provisions to them? God is fully aware of everyone's deeds.

NO ONE SUFFERS INJUSTICE

[4:40] God does not inflict the least injustice on anyone. On the contrary, He multiplies the reward manifold for the righteous work and grants from His bounties a great recompense.
[4:41] Thus, when the day of ultimate reckoning comes We will call upon a witness from each community and a messenger from among their people will serve as a witness.[189]
[4:42] On that day those who disbelieved in this guidance and neglected the messenger's teachings will wish that they were level with the ground; not a single remark will they be able to hide from God. [190]

HYGIENE & A CLEAR MIND FOR GOOD SOCIAL CONDUCT

[4:43] O you who believe in this guidance, do not carry out your commitments while inebriated, so that you are clear in what you say, nor after sexual activity, without bathing, so that you are clean in body, unless you are travelling. If you are ill or travelling or you have made a call of nature or have been sexually active and you cannot find water you shall observe tayammum; that is perform dry ablution by touching clean dry soil or use paper to wipe yourself clean. God is Pardoner and Protector.[191]

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[189] **Witness:** a person who sees an event, typically a crime or accident, take place. Such witnesses will testify on the Day of Accountability. See verses 16:89; 28:75.

[190] **Remark:** recount an event, narration, discourse, message, news, history. (Arabic: *hadith*. Root: H'D'TH). In essence *hadith* means speech. Synonyms are used to convey the different facets of *speech* while remaining true to the root. This technique is necessary (and used for some other words too) due to the deficiency in English where no single word projects the depth and breadth of the Arabic word. The context identifies that the meaning is correctly transposed. This the first occurrence of the word *hadith* and states that those who neglect the messenger's teaching, the Quran, will wish that they were not held accountable. **Hadith:** There are a total of 28 verses with the word *hadith*, including the one in Sura 39:23, which states that the Quran is the best hadith, the source of information regarding this Deen-Islam, the Social System of God. See verses 4:78, 4:87, 4:140, 6:68, 7:185, 12:6, 12:21, 12:101, 12:111, 18:6, 20:9, 23:44, 31:6, 33:53, 34:19, 39:23, 43:43; 45:6, 51:24, 52:34, 53:59, 56:81, 66:3, 68:37; 68:44, 77:50, 79:15, 85:17, 88:1. Also see verses 6:112-116; 25:30-31; 69:44-47 & verses 33:62; 48:25; 78:40. See footnote to verse 71:28.

[191] **To fulfil** one's commitments requires clear thinking, cleanliness in body and mind. In carrying out obligations, to be dishevelled and unclean is bad enough, but to also be drunk or under the

[4:44] Have you noted those who accept part of the scripture and how they choose to drift and wish that you drift from the right path?
[4:45] God knows best who your enemies are. God is the only sustainer and sovereign. God is your only supporter.

[4:46] Among those who are Jewish some distort the words beyond the truth and they say, "We hear but we disobey," and "Your words are falling on deaf ears." And they twist their words to mock your Deen. Had they said, "We hear and we obey," or "We hear you and watch over us," it would have been better for them and more righteous. Instead, they have incurred condemnation from God due to their disbelief. Consequently the majority of them are unable to accept this guidance.
[4:47] O you who received the scripture, you shall believe in what We reveal in this book confirming what you have, before We banish certain faces to exile or condemn them as We condemned those who desecrated previous teachings. God's command is carried out in completeness.

HIGH TREASON: THE UNFORGIVABLE CRIME

[4:48] God does not protect those who accept any authority to rival or rank with Him but He protects you from lesser offences according to his ordinance. Anyone who sets up an authority to equal or rival God has forged an atrocious offence.
[4:49] Have you noted those who exalt themselves? Instead, God is the One who raises your esteem according to His laws without the least injustice.
[4:50] Note how they invent lies then attribute them to God; this is a gross offence.
[4:51] Have you noted those who accept a part of this guidance and how they support false doctrines and set up authorities to rival God, then say to those who do not believe, "You are better than those who believe in this guidance."
[4:52] It is they who have incurred God's condemnation and whomever God condemns will not find any helper.
[4:53] Do they own a share of God's sovereignty? If they did they would not give anyone as much as a small coin.

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influence of drugs is highly destructive. This verse does not say that intoxicants are 'haram' or forbidden but clearly instructs not to be under the influence of intoxicants while carrying out obligations and fulfilling commitments. See verses and footnotes 2:219; 5:90; 12:49; 16:67. When God restricts or forbids something He specifically uses the word *haram*. See verses 7:33; 10:59; 16:115-116. **Cleanliness:** 5:6; 7:31. **Pardoner and Protector:** (Arabic: *afuwwun-ghafur*). See verses 2:52, 2:58; 22:60; 58:2.

[4:54] Are they envious of the people on whom God has showered His blessings? We have given Abraham's family the guidance and understanding; We endowed them with a great capacity.
[4:55] Some of them believed in it and some of them repelled it; a life of hell is the only just consequence that they created for themselves.

[4:56] Surely, those who disbelieve in Our revelations, We will, according to Our ordinance, condemn them to hell. Whenever their wounds heal they receive new lacerations. Thus, they will suffer continuously. God is Almighty, Most Wise.
[4:57] As for those who believe and lead a life of good works We will admit them into a state of harmony; there they live forever. They will have pure companions with them. We will admit them into a state of tranquillity and peace.

HONESTY THE BEST POLICY

[4:58] God commands you to give back anything that has been entrusted to you. If you judge among any people, you shall judge equitably. The best enlightenment indeed is what God recommends for you. God is Hearer and sees all things.
[4:59] O you who believe, you shall obey God and you shall obey the messenger, and those who govern among you. If you dispute in any matter you shall refer to God's messenger; this guidance the messenger brought to you, if you do believe in accountability to God and the Day of Reckoning. This is better for you and provides you with the best solution.[192]

HYPOCRITES AVOID INTERACTION WITH BELIEVERS

[4:60] Have you noted those who claim that they believe in what was revealed to you and in what was revealed before you then endorse the unjust laws of the authority they set up to rival God? They are commanded to reject such laws. Indeed it is the evildoers wish to lead you far adrift.
[4:61] When they are told to come to what God has revealed to the messenger, you see the hypocrites painfully avoiding you.
[4:62] How will it be when a disaster hits them as a consequence of their own works? They will come to you then and swear by God: "Our intentions were good and righteous."
[4:63] God is fully aware of their innermost intentions. You shall ignore the hypocrites, enlighten them and give them good advice that may redeem their Self.

[192] **Obey God and Obey Messenger:** this in practice means to obey the message, i.e. the Quran: the message and the revealed guidance of God. Since the messenger is no longer here, this is the only practical meaning of this verse. See verses 4:65; 6:50; 6:114; 39:23; 50:45 & 17:73; 5:49; 80:42.

REASONED CONVICTION: CHARACTERISTIC OF BELIEVERS

[4:64] We did not send any messenger except to be obeyed in accordance with God's guidance. Had they when they wronged their Self come to you and asked for God's protection and the messenger supplicated for their protection, they would have found God as the Redeemer, most Compassionate.

[4:65] Never indeed by your Sustainer will they be considered to have real conviction unless they come to this guidance to settle their disputes, then find no hesitation in their hearts whatsoever in accepting this criterion. They must accept this with full and complete compliance.[193]

[4:66] Had We decreed for them to offer their lives or give up their homes, they would not have done it, except for a few of them. Even if such a command was issued, had they done what they were commanded to do, it would have been better for them and would have proved the strength of their conviction.

[4:67] And We would have granted them a great recompense.

[4:68] And We would have guided them in the right and balanced path.

BELIEVERS IN THE BEST COMPANY

[4:69] Those who obey God through this guidance His messenger has brought, belong with those blessed by God; the messengers, the sincere, the truthful witnesses and those who do good. They are in the best company.

[4:70] Such is the bounty from God, and God is the Knower of all things.

[4:71] O you who believe you shall remain watchful and be active as individuals or when you assemble together.

[4:72] Surely, there are those among you who drag their feet, then if a setback afflicts you they say, "God has blessed me that I did not suffer with them."

[4:73] But if you attain good things from God, they then say, as if no friendship has been lost between you and them, "I wish I was with them so I could share in such a great victory."

THE BELIEVERS IN ACTION:
THEY GIVE UP THE GOOD FOR THE GREAT

[4:74] Those who readily fight in the cause of God are those who are prepared to risk this world in favour of a far better future. Whoever fights in the cause of God, then gets killed or attains victory, We will surely grant him a great recompense.

[193] **People should** become believers because they see the value of this profound guidance, not because of any 'spiritual' or 'mystical' experience. See verses and footnotes 7:75; 52:29.

[4:75] Why should you not fight in the cause of God when oppressed men, women and children are imploring: "Our Sustainer, deliver us from these people who are tyrannical, depraved and bloodthirsty. Raise for us a defender, a champion and a friend."[194]
[4:76] Those who believe in this guidance fight in the cause of God, while those who reject this fight for tyranny. Therefore you shall fight against these evil allies; the power of the wicked comes to nothing.
[4:77] Have you noted those who were told, "You do not have to fight; all you need to do is hold to your minimum obligations and it is enough to purify you," then, when fighting was decreed for them, they feared their opponents as much as they feared God or even more? They said, "O God, why did You force this fighting on us? If only You respite us for a while!" Say: "The materials of this world are worth nothing while the future is far better for the those who do good and you never suffer the slightest injustice."
[4:78] Wherever you are, death will catch up with you, even if you live in formidable castles. When something good happens to them, they say, "This is from God," and when something bad afflicts them, they blame you. Say: "Everything is a consequence of God's law." What is the matter with these people? They hardly understand the realities of this Hadith, the message from God?[195]

GOD NEVER HARMS ANYONE: THE LAW OF REQUITAL

[4:79] Anything good that happens to you is from God and anything bad that happens to you is a result of your own work. We have sent you as a messenger with guidance for all people and God suffices as witness.[196]
[4:80] Whoever obeys the messenger and this guidance is obeying God. As for those who turn away We did not send you as their guardian to watch over them.

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[194] **Fight** in the cause of God, give up a lower value for a higher value. See verses 3:156-158; 4:37-79; 8:58; 9:1-15; 42:39. **Zero Tolerance:** The rejecters of this guidance should be dealt with strictly and justly at all times. See verses and footnotes 3:169-172; 9.73.

[195] **Message:** (Arabic: *hadith*). See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37. **Martyrdom:** Mu'mins, those convinced by this guidance, are prepared to fight for a just cause, to kill or get killed. In times of war against corruptions, oppression, insurrection and injustice it is the duty of all fit and able men to take up arms, and unlike the hypocrites, the mu'mins fight until victory or death. See verses and footnotes 3:158: 4:74-6; 8:25; 8:58; 9:1-15; 42:39. **God has bought** from the believers their lives and wealth in exchange for lasting serenity. See verse 9:111. **Aggression** is forbidden: See verses and footnotes 2:190-194; 4:89; 5:2; 5:11; 5:87; 7:33; 8:19; 8:39. 42:42. 49:9. Also verse 9:73.

[196] **God** never sends harm to anyone. Anything bad that happens is a result of our own actions. God's Law of Requital provides just consequences. This verse also clearly states that God suffices as witness that Muhammad is His messenger - no one else needs to or can testify, especially if they never witnessed the event. See verses 4:40; 42:30 and 6:19; 4:166; 13:43; 63:1

[4:81] They pledge obedience but as soon as they leave you, some of them secretly spread rumours contrary to what they hear from you. God records their innermost corrupt intentions. You shall disregard them and put your trust in God. God suffices as the disposer of all affairs.

A CHALLENGE FROM GOD

[4:82] Why do they not study and consider the Quran with care? If it were from other than God they would have found in it many contradictions.[197]

[4:83] When a rumour affecting matters of security comes their way, they spread it readily. Had they referred it to the messenger and those in charge among them, those who understand these matters would have advised them. If it were not for God's grace and mercy towards mankind, you would have followed the evildoer's path, except rarely.
[4:84] You shall fight in the cause of God, although you are in due course responsible only for your own Self, and exhort the believers to do the same. God will neutralise the power of those who reject this guidance. God is much more powerful and much more capable.
[4:85] Whoever contributes to a good deed receives a share of the resulting reward and whoever takes part in any evil work incurs a share of the retribution. God holds to account all things.

MAINTAIN GOOD MANNERS

[4:86] When a courteous greeting is offered you shall respond with a better greeting or at least an equal one. God reckons all things.[198]
[4:87] God: there is no authority to rank with Him. He will without a doubt summon you on the Day of Resurrection, the inevitable day. Whose hadith is more truthful than God's?[199]

DON'T LET DISBELIEVERS DIVIDE YOU

[4:88] Why should you divide yourselves into two groups and dispute because of the hypocrites among you? God is the one who condemned them because of their own behaviour. Do you want to guide those whom

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[197] **A challenge** from God. If the author of the Quran is telling you how to defeat Him, then He is certain that He is undefeatable. This challenge has yet to be met. Without a doubt the Quran is unique and inimitable. See verses and footnotes 2:23-24; 10:38; 11:13; 17:88-89.

[198] **Greetings** and farewells from a muslim should be of 'Peace'. (Arabic: *salamun*). There is no better way to introduce yourself because the one who receives it is secure in the knowledge that you wish him no harm. If it is said with deception then it shreds the integrity of the person offering such a greeting and all future credibility is shattered. In Arabic it is *salamun alaika* to greet one person, and *salamun alaikum* to greet two or more persons. See verses: 6:54; 19:47; 10:10; 14:23; 19:47; 33:44; 39:73; 43:89; 58:8.

[199] **Hadith:** message (Arabic: *hadith*) See footnote to verse 4:42. Those who uphold fabricated hadith are questioned: Whose *hadith* is more truthful than God's?

God has allowed adrift? Whomever God lets adrift you can never find a way to guide them.
[4:89] They wish that you reject this guidance as they have rejected it, then you become similarly wrong. Do not consider them friends unless they face the challenges along with you in the cause of God. If they aggressively turn against you, you shall fight them and you may kill them when you encounter them. You shall not accept them as friends or as allies.
[4:90] Exempted are those who join people with whom you have made commitments and those who come to you with no desire to fight you or their own relatives. Had God willed He could have allowed them to fight against you. Therefore, if they leave you alone, refrain from fighting you and offer you peace, then God does not permit you to fight them.
[4:91] You will find others who come to assess your position and that of those with you, and as soon as opportunity arises they fight against you. Unless these people leave you alone, offer you peace and stop fighting you, you may fight them wherever you encounter them. Against these, We give you clear approval to fight.

BELIEVERS DO NOT KILL BELIEVERS

[4:92] No believer kills another believer, except by mistake. If you kill a believer by accident, you shall atone by freeing a believing slave and paying a compensation to the victim's family unless they forfeit such a compensation with sincerity. If the victim belonged to people who are at war with you, though he was a believer, you shall atone by freeing a believing slave. If he belonged to people with whom you have signed a peace treaty, you shall pay compensation in addition to freeing a believing slave. If you cannot find a slave to free, you shall atone by an act of Self-discipline for two consecutive months in order to be redeemed by God. God is Knower, Most Wise.[200]

MURDER: UNJUSTIFIED KILLING

[4:93] The most serious form of murder is the killing of a mu'min[201] with deliberate planning, premeditation or malice. Anyone who kills a mu'min

[200] **How do you** free a believing slave in this modern age? Most people think there is no slavery in this day and age but informed people know that it still exists. Britain in 2016 has an Anti-slavery Commissioner (Kevin Hyland) who estimated in his annual October report that there are between 10,000 and 13,000 slaves in the UK economy. Amongst other cases, in 2014, Darrell Simester was held and worked as a slave on Cariad Farm in Newport, Wales. Also many women are imported into Western Europe from all over the world to be slaves in the sex industry. Other people work in factories for pitiful wages or in bonded labour in developing countries. Hidden or open slavery in one form or another is a real misery for many in countries around the world. It is the duty of muslims to free slaves at every opportunity. The decree in the Quran is to free slaves. See verses and footnotes 2:177; 58:3. **Abstain,** Self-restraint, Self-discipline: See verse 2:183.
[201] **Who is a mu'min?** See verse 49:14.

in this manner deserves God's condemnation and an eternal retribution of turmoil. For such a person, God has prepared a penalty most dreadful.
[4:94] O you who believe, when you advance in the cause of God, you shall do so with certainty, and do not say to one who offers you peace, "You are not mu'min: a believer," seeking to plunder the riches of this world. For God possesses infinite wealth. Remember that you used to be like them and God made you prosperous. Therefore, you shall be steadfast. God is fully aware of everything you do.

DON'T BE APATHETIC TO GOD'S CAUSE
ACTIVE BELIEVERS DESERVE HIGHER STATUS

[4:95] Being unwilling, sedentary and lazy is not the same as being unable due to illness or accident and is certainly not equal to those who strive in the cause of God with their money and their lives. God exalts those who venture with their money and their lives above the sedentary and lazy people. For both, God promises a good future but God exalts the active over the sedentary with a greater recompense.[202]
[4:96] The higher ranks come from Him as well as protection and mercy. God is Protector, Most Merciful.

[4:97] Those whose lives are terminated by the malaika while in a state of wronging their Self, the malaika will ask them, "What was the matter with you?" They will say, "We were oppressed on earth." They malaika will ask, "Was God's earth not spacious enough for you to disperse throughout it?" For these the final state is hell, a miserable conclusion of their own making.
[4:98] Exempted are the weak men, women and children who do not possess the strength and do not have the means to find a way out.
[4:99] These may be pardoned and exonerated by God. God is the Forgiver and Protector.[203]
[4:100] Anyone who takes up the challenge in the cause of God will find on earth great bounties and richness. Anyone who takes up the challenge of the system for God with this guidance brought by His messenger, and then death catches up with him, his recompense is reserved with God. God is Protector, Most Merciful.

[202] **Strive,** struggle, venture, exert, endeavour. (Arabic: *jihad.* Root: J'H'D). Derivatives: *jahadia, muJahiduna, tuJahiduna, jahida, jahidi, jahadaka, jahidum, jahadu, jahidu, jihadin, jihadan, jihadihi, yuJahidu, yuJahiduna.* The word jihad is commonly mistaken to mean taking up arms for a 'holy war'. As these verse in the Quran show it means to strive or struggle for a cause. For a muslim an armed conflict is the last resort when all other endeavours have failed. See verses: 2:218; 5:35; 5:54 8:72; 8:74; 8:75; 9:16; 9:20; 9:25; 9:73; 9:81; 9:86; 9:88; 16:110; 22:78; 25:52; 29:6; 29:69; 31:15; 47:31; 49:15; 60:1; 61:11; 66:9.
[203] **Pardoner and Protector:** (Arabic: *afuwwun-ghafur*). See verses 2:52, 2:58; 4:43; 22:60; 58:2.

COMMITMENTS WITH DISBELIEVERS

[4:101] When you are travelling or during hardship, you make no error by minimising your commitments, if you fear that those who reject this guidance may attack you. Surely, the disbelievers, those who reject this guidance, are your most ardent enemies,

[4:102] and when you are with them and you escort them to fulfil their commitments, ensure some of your men provide security for you; be armed with any necessary weapons and make certain they stand guard behind you until all submissions are complete. Then let the other group, that has not yet shown their acceptance, take their turn and still safeguard yourself and hold onto your weapons. Those who disbelieve wish to see you neglect your safety and your weapons in order to assault you once and for all. You make no mistake, because of bad weather or injury, by relaxing your defence, so long as you remain alert and protected. God has prepared for the disbelievers a disgraceful retribution.[204]

[4:103] Once you complete your obligations you shall be always be grateful to God while standing, sitting or lying down. Once the danger is over you shall observe your full commitments and those who believe in this guidance are punctual when discharging their commitments.

[4:104] Do not hesitate in pursuing the enemy. If you suffer, they also suffer. However, you anticipate from God what they can never expect. God is All Knowing, Most Wise.

[4:105] We have sent down to you this guidance truthfully in order to evaluate people in accordance with God's law. You shall not take side with the betrayers.

[4:106] You shall implore God for protection. God is Protector, Most Merciful.

DON'T SUPPORT THOSE WHO DO WRONG

[4:107] Do not argue on behalf of those who have wronged their own Self; God does not care for any rebel or for the ones who are guilty.

[4:108] They hide what they do from people and do not care to hide their conduct from God, though He is with them even as they harbour ideas against all good. God is fully aware of everything they do.

[4:109] Here you are shielding the guilty and arguing on their behalf in this world. Who is going to argue with God on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection? Who is going to be their advocate?

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[204] **Commitments:** (Arabic: *solaa*). Verse 102 is a continuation of verse 101 and it is apparent that commitments (*solaa*) are being enforced upon the defeated disbelievers who may or may not be willing to complete their obligations and submissions under an agreement or treaty. See footnote to verse 2:3. **Martyrdom:** Mu'mins, those convinced by this guidance, are prepared to fight for a just cause and to kill or get killed. 3:158; 4:74-78.

[4:110] Anyone who commits evil or wrongs his Self then sincerely implores God for protection will find God as his Protector, Most Merciful.
[4:111] Anyone who does wrong earns only to the detriment of his own Self. God most Wise is fully aware of all that they do.
[4:112] Anyone who does wrong then blames an innocent person for it has committed an offence of serious proportions.
[4:113] If it were not for God's grace towards you and His mercy, some of them would have misled you. They only mislead themselves and they can never harm you in the least. God has sent down to you this guidance and the law and He has taught you what you never knew. Indeed, God's bounties upon you have been great.
[4:114] There is nothing good about any of their private meetings except for those who advocate sincere works and righteous deeds or making reconciliations among their people. Anyone who does this in response to God's teachings, We will grant him a great recompense.
[4:115] As for him who opposes this message after the guidance has been pointed out to him and follows other than this path, We will let him adrift in the direction he has chosen and commit him to a hell. What a miserable end of his own making.

TREACHERY IS AN UNFORGIVABLE CRIME

[4:116] God does not protect those who commit treachery and set up an authority to rank with Him, but He protects you from lesser offences in accordance with His ordinance. Anyone who follows an authority that contradicts God's law has indeed strayed far away.
[4:117] They even worship female deities besides Him; as a matter of fact it is their own egotistic Self that they idolise.[205]
[4:118] God has condemned this. Surely the egotistic Self engages to divert a significant number of those who serve God.
[4:119] The egotistic Self misleads them and entices them; it influences them to perform rituals such as marking of livestock for sacrifice and sways them to distort the creation of God. Anyone who accepts the mischievous ones as their allies instead of God has incurred a loss that will be difficult to bear.
[4:120] They make promises that are tempting. What these evil fiends promise are no more than an illusion.
[4:121] These have incurred a state of hell as their final end and can never evade it.

[205] **Ego:** For any human being to consider his or her own opinion as the ultimate arbiter of Permanent Values and the supreme judge of Absolute Values is to idolise your own ego as an authority to rival or equal to God. Furthermore to give any other human being these rights is also a gross offence, both are *shirk*: the assigning of sovereignty to other than God. The Quran, God's guidance, and only the Quran, is the criterion for all mankind. See verses 6:19; 6:114.

[4:122] As for those who believe and lead a life of good works, We will admit them into a state of eternal harmony. Such is the truthful promise of God. Whose promises are more truthful than God's?

THE LAW OF REQUITAL

[4:123] God's law of requital is not in accordance with your wishes or the wishes of the people of the scripture, and anyone who commits evil pays for it and will have no helper or supporter against God.
[4:124] As for those who lead a life of good works, male or female, while believing in God and ultimate accountability to him, they enter a state of eternal harmony and serenity without the least injustice.
[4:125] Who is better guided in his deen than the one who submits totally to God, follows higher principles, as did Abraham, by accepting accountability of the Self as truth? God has chosen Abraham as a close friend.
[4:126] To God belongs everything in the heavens and the earth. God is in full control of all things.

PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND THE VULNERABLE

[4:127] They seek your judgement regarding women, say: "God enlightens you regarding them, as decreed for you in this guidance. You shall restore the rights of females who are deceived out of their due mahr,[206] though you wish to marry them. You must not take advantage of them. The rights of the vulnerable must be protected. You shall treat the orphans with justice. Whatever good you do, God is fully aware of everything."
[4:128] If a woman fears cruelty or desertion from her husband, the couple shall try to reconcile their differences for conciliation is best for them. Selfishness is a human weakness but it is better if you do good and lead a life of good works. God is fully aware of everything you do.

POLYGAMY DISCOURAGED

[4:129] You can never be equitable in dealing with more than one wife, no matter how hard you try. Therefore do not be so brutal as to leave one of them in suspension; neither enjoying marriage nor free to marry someone else. If you correct this situation and maintain righteousness, God is Protector, Most Merciful.[207]
[4:130] If the couple decide they must part, God will provide for each of them from His bounties. God is Bounteous, Most Wise.
[4:131] To God belongs everything in the heavens and the earth and We have decreed on those who received the scripture before you and

[206] **Mahr:** This is the groom's gift to the bride. See verse 2:236.
[207] **It is clear** from this verse that polygamy is strongly discouraged as a norm because it is difficult, if not impossible, to be fair to more than one wife. See verse 4:23.

prescribed for you that you shall fulfil your duty to God. If you disbelieve in this guidance then to God belongs everything in the heavens and the earth. God is above all needs and worthy of all praise.
[4:132] To God belongs everything in the heavens and the earth and sufficient is God to complete all things.
[4:133] If He wills He can annihilate you and substitute others in your place. God is certainly able to do this.
[4:134] Anyone who seeks the materials of this world should know that God possesses both the materials of this world and all that is in the Hereafter. God hears all things and sees all things.

DON'T BE A FALSE WITNESS

[4:135] O you who believe, you shall be absolutely truthful and remember your accountability to God, when you serve as witnesses, even against yourselves, your parents and your relatives. Whether the accused is rich or poor, God takes care of both. Therefore, do not be biased by your personal wishes. If you deviate or disregard this commandment then remember God is fully aware of everything you do.
[4:136] O you who believe, you shall believe in God and this guidance brought by His messenger and the guidance He revealed before that. Anyone who refuses to believe in God, His malaika, His guidance, His messengers and the ultimate accountability, has indeed gone far astray.

FREEDOM OF BELIEF

[4:137] Surely, those who believe, then disbelieve, then believe, then disbelieve again, then plunge even deeper into disbelief, God will not protect them and neither will He guide them in any way.[208]
[4:138] Warn the hypocrites that they have incurred painful retribution.
[4:139] They are the ones who ally themselves with those who reject this guidance instead of becoming the allies of those who believe. Are they seeking dignity with them? All dignity comes only from the grace of God.
[4:140] He has instructed you in this guidance that if you hear God's revelations being mocked and ridiculed you shall not sit with them unless they change to a better discussion.[209] Otherwise you will be as guilty as

[208] **Freedom** of belief is a right of every individual. **Apostasy** is to abandon one's belief or religion. Since Islam is not a religion there is no punishment for apostasy described in the Quran, instead God states that He will not protect nor guide the people who disbelieve after believing. Those who abandon God's guidance and accept an authority to rival God are 'mushriks', that is traitors. People who are not guided are already on the road to turmoil and will face the consequences through God's ordinance. Muslims are instructed to be tolerant and understanding. See verses 2:217; 2:256; 9:6; 9:115; 10:99; 11:118; 13:40; 16:125; 18:29; 41:34; 60:8; 73:10; 109:1-6.
[209] **Discussion/discourse:** (Arabic: *hadith*). See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.

they are. God will gather the hypocrites and the disbelievers together in a fiery turmoil of their own making.
[4:141] They watch you and wait; if you attain victory from God they say to you, "Were we not with you?" But if the disbelievers gain some success they say to them, "Did we not side with you and protect you from the believers?" God will judge between you on the Day of Reckoning. God will never allow the disbelievers to prevail over the believers.
[4:142] The hypocrites think that they are deceiving God but He is the One who gives them latitude. When they fulfil their commitments they do so with some hesitation. That is because they only show off in front of people and rarely do they reflect on God and their accountability to Him.
[4:143] They drift in between without sincerity, neither belonging to this group or that group. Whomever God leaves astray you will never find a way to guide him.[210]
[4:144] O you who believe, you shall not ally yourselves with the disbelievers instead of those who believe in this guidance. Do you wish to provide God with a clear proof against you?
[4:145] The hypocrites will be committed to the lowest degree of hell, a lasting agony of their own making and they will find no one to help them.
[4:146] Only those who repent, reform, hold fast to God's guidance and live their life according to God's System alone will be counted among those who sincerely believe. God will bless those who believe in this guidance with a great recompense.[211]
[4:147] What will God gain from punishing you if you are grateful and follow this guidance? God honours those who do good and He is aware of all things.

DO NOT USE BAD LANGUAGE

[4:148] God does not like the use of bad language but disregards it if one is aggrieved with gross injustice. God hears all things and Knows all things.
[4:149] If you do good work, openly or secretly or forgive a transgression, God is the Protector and the All-powerful.

MAKE NO DISTINCTION AMONG GOD'S MESSENGERS

[4:150] Those who disbelieve in God and His messengers and seek to sever God's association with His messengers and say, "We believe in some and reject some," and wish to follow a path in between;
[4:151] these are the real disbelievers of this guidance. We have prepared for the disbelievers an appalling retribution.

[210] **Drifter:** a person influenced by opinions outside his own mind. See verse and footnote 15:42.
[211] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.

[4:152] As for those who believe in God and His messengers and make no distinction among them, He will grant them their recompense. God is Protector, Most Merciful.[212]

LEARN FROM HISTORY

[4:153] The people of the scripture challenge you to bring down to them a book from the sky. They asked Moses for more than that saying, "Show us God, physically." Consequently, lightning struck them, as a consequence of their audacity. Additionally, they worshiped the calf, after all the clear signs they had been given. Yet, We pardoned all this. We supported Moses with profound signs.
[4:154] And Mount Sinai towered above them as We took their covenant. And We said to them, "Enter the gate in submission." And We said to them, "Do not desecrate the Sabbath." Indeed, We took from them a solemn covenant.
[4:155] They incurred condemnation for violating their oath, rejecting God's revelations, killing the messengers unjustly and for saying, "Our minds are made up." In fact, it is according to God's ordinance that their minds become impervious to guidance and this is why they fail to believe, except rarely.[213]
[4:156] They are condemned for disbelieving and uttering a gross lie about Mary, the mother of Jesus.

JESUS WAS NOT CRUCIFIED

[4:157] And they claimed that they killed the messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of God. In fact, they never killed him, they never crucified him, it appeared to them that they did. All those who dispute this matter are somewhat doubtful concerning this. They possess no knowledge; they only conjecture. For certain, they never killed him. [214]
[4:158] Instead, God raised Jesus to Himself; God is Almighty, Most Wise.
[4:159] It was essential for everyone among the people of the scripture to believe in the teachings of Jesus before his death. On the Day of Resurrection, he will be a witness against them.

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[212] **Messengers:** do not exalt one above another. 2:135-136, 285; 3:84; 4:150-52.

[213] **When people** continually ignore this guidance they gradually become impervious to it. See verse and footnote 6:25.

[214] **History** tell us that Jesus (Hebrew/Aramic: *Yehoshua*) son of Mary and Jesus Barabbas were the two captives - one of whom was to be condemned to death. The Quran confirms unequivocally that it was not Jesus, son of Mary who was killed or crucified. Many of the events in the Bible are sketchy and ambiguous at best. The Gospels in the New Testament, for example, give different genealogies of Jesus. **The Bible** is not the Injeel mentioned in the Quran. See verses and footnotes 4:171; 62:5.

[4:160] Due to their transgressions and also for consistently repelling people from the path of God We restricted for the Jews good foods that used to be lawful for them.
[4:161] And as for the practice of usury and profiteering which was forbidden, and for consuming many people's money illicitly We have prepared for those among them, the disbelievers of Jesus' teachings, a painful retribution.[215]
[4:162] As for those among them who are well founded in knowledge and the believers of Jesus' teachings, they believe in this guidance revealed to you and in what was revealed before you. They are observers of their commitments and keep them pure; they are believers in accountability to God and the Day of Reckoning. We grant these a great reward.

[4:163] We have inspired you, as We inspired Noah and the messengers after him. And We inspired Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, the patriarchs and Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron and Solomon. And We gave David the guidance in the form of Zabur.[216]
[4:164] We sent messengers We have told you about and messengers We never told you about. And God spoke to Moses directly.
[4:165] We sent messengers to deliver good news as well as warnings. Thus, any person will not be able to challenge God when they face Him, after all, the messengers did come to them. God is Almighty, Most Wise.[217]
[4:166] But God bears witness concerning what He has revealed to you; He has revealed it with His knowledge. And the malaika bear witness as well, but God suffices as witness.
[4:167] Surely, those who disbelieve and repel people from the path of God have drifted far astray.[218]
[4:168] Those who disbelieve and transgress, God will not forgive them, and neither will He guide them in any way;
[4:169] except the way to hell, wherein they abide forever. This is easy for God to do.
[4:170] O people, the messenger has come to you with the truth from the One who sustains you. Therefore, you shall believe in this guidance for your own good. If you disbelieve, then to God belongs everything in the heavens and the earth. God knows all things and is Most Wise

TRINITY: A FABRICATION

[4:171] O people of the scripture do not transgress the limits of the Deen and do not say about God except the truth. The messiah, Jesus, the son of

[215] **Usury:** economic oppression and profiteering. See verse and footnote 2:275
[216] **Zabur:** the guidance given by inspiration to David.
[217] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). See verse and footnote: 2:76.
[218] **Drifter:** a person influenced by opinions outside his own mind. See verse and footnote 15:42.

Mary, was only a messenger of God who came to convey His words to Mary and brought a revealed guidance from Him by means of a ruh:[219] a direction from Him. Therefore, you shall believe in accountability to God and the message that His messengers brought. And don't say, 'Trinity'. Stop this lie, it will be better for you. There is only One God. Be He glorified; God is far above the need to have a son. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth. God suffices as sustainer and defender.[220]
[4:172] Jesus, the messiah would never think it undignified to be a servant of God and neither would the favoured malaika. Those who deride serving God and are too arrogant to serve Him; all will be convened before Him.
[4:173] As for those who believe in this guidance and lead a life of good works, He will fully recompense them and shower them with His grace. As for those who are full of contempt and are conceited, He will commit them to painful retribution. They will find no supporter beside God nor a benefactor.
[4:174] O mankind, this proof has come to you from your Sustainer; We have sent down this message as a profound beacon to guide you.
[4:175] Those who believe in God and hold fast to Him, He will protect them compassionately and with elegance guide them to Him in a path that does not deviate.

FURTHER INHERITANCE DECREE

[4:176] When they ask for your guidance regarding inheritance; say: "God advises you concerning a single person; if one dies and leaves no children and he had a sister, she gets half the inheritance. If she dies first, he inherits from her, if she left no children. If there are two sisters, they get two-thirds of the inheritance. If the siblings are men and women, the male gets twice the share of the female." God thus clarifies for you, lest you go astray. God is fully aware of all things.

[219] **Ruh:** a directive energy, command or law emanating from God but not of, or part of, God. The ruh, once it secures its lodgement in man, becomes the *Nafs,* the Self, the Personality of each individual. This is God's most valuable gift to man who is charged with the work to actualise its latent powers and develop it to the fullest extent. The Self grows and strengthens with positive action and diminishes in power with regressive acts. See verses: 2:87; :253; 4:171; 5:110; 15:29; 16;2; 16:102; 17:85; 19:17; 21:91; 26:193; 32:9; 38:72; 40:15; 42:52; 58:22; 66:12; 70:4; 78:38; 97:4.

[220] **Trinity:** the state of being three; a group of three people or things. In the Christian faith the three persons of the godhead; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, i.e. the union of three divine persons. See verses 2:116; 5:73; 6:101; 9:30; 10:68; 17:111; 18:4; 19:35; 19:88; 19:91-92; 25:2; 37:152; 39:4; 43:81; 72:3. & 4:157. See verses 16:51; 21:22; 23:91. See verses and footnote **Unity:** 112:1-4, **the Injeel:** 62:5. **Blasphemy:** see footnote to 27:91.

Sura 5: The Feast (Al-Ma'idah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[5:1] O you who believe, you shall fulfil your promises. Permitted for you to eat are all livestock, except those specifically restricted in this guidance. You shall not permit the hunting of game, except as God decrees according to His laws.

CONSERVATION AND HUNTING

[5:2] O you who believe, do not violate the decrees instituted by God, the restricted months for hunting, the guidance about hunting, the indicators for hunting and the restrictions to maintain harmony in the Sanctioned System[221] as you seek the grace and approval of your Sustainer. When permitted, you may hunt.[222] Do not be provoked into enmity by those who try and prevent you from accepting the sanctions of the Submissions. You shall cooperate in matters of safeguarding your righteousness and sanctitude. Do not cooperate in matters that are wrongful and evil. You shall do your duty to God. God is strict in enforcing retribution.

ONLY FOUR MEATS RESTRICTED

[5:3] Restricted for you are animals that die of themselves, excess blood, the meat of pigs and food dedicated to other than God. Animals that die of themselves include those strangled, struck with an object, fallen from a height, gored, attacked by a wild animal, unless rescued before death and animals sacrificed for or consecrated to anyone other than God. Also restricted for you is any food associated with religious rituals; this is an abomination. Constantly, the disbelievers are in despair of those who follow the guidance of this Deen; do not fear them, instead fulfil your duty to Me. This day, I have perfected your Deen, the established Order, perfected My favours upon you and I have decreed for you harmony in the System of this Deen-Islam. If one is forced by circumstances to eat restricted food, without deliberate or willing transgression, then God is Protector, most Merciful.[223]

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[221] **Harmony** in the Sanctioned System, (Arabic: *aminal baytal-Harami*). The word *haram* means: restricted, prohibited or sanctioned, depending on the context. See also 2:144.

[222] **This section,** verses 5:2 and 5:94-103, lays down the foundation for conservation of animal life. Conservation demands that certain controls be placed on hunting and these by-laws, the basis for which is found in this chapter, are to be enacted by the governing administration of the day. This verse 5:2 is about conservation and keeping an equilibrium in the environment. See also verse 9:18.

[223] **Food:** Clearly meat slaughtered by 'people of the book' is also permitted. These people also accept God's guidance, His laws and Quranic values. It should be noted that no slaughter ritual is mentioned in the Quran. Read verses through 5:3-5 and see verses 2:168; 6:118; 16:115.

[5:4] They ask you concerning what is permitted for them, say: "Lawful for you are all good things including what your trained dogs and falcons catch for you." You train them according to God's ordinance. You may eat what they catch for you and mention God's name thereupon. You shall observe God's law. God is most efficient in reckoning. [224]
[5:5] Today all good food is made lawful for you. The food of the people of the previous scripture is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them. Also, you may marry the virtuous women among the believers as well as the virtuous women among the followers of previous scripture, provided you pay them their due mahr.[225] You shall maintain your integrity by not committing any excesses, indecency or taking secret lovers. Anyone who rejects this guidance, all his work will be in vain and in the future he will be with the losers.[226]

IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL HYGIENE

[5:6] O you who believe, as a minimum preparation for observing your commitments and fulfilling your obligations, you shall wash your faces, wash your arms to the elbows, wipe your heads and wash your feet to the ankles, and if you are unclean due to sexual activity, you shall bathe. If you are ill, travelling, have been to the toilet or have had sexual contact and you cannot find water, you shall perform tayammum; a dry ablution by using clean paper or touching clean dry soil, then rubbing your face and hands. God does not wish to make life difficult for you, He wishes to cleanse you and to perfect His favours upon you, that you may be appreciative.[227]
[5:7] Remember God's favours upon you and the promise that He makes with you, and say: "We hear and we obey." You shall follow God's guidance. God is fully aware of your innermost thoughts.[228]

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[224] **Dogs** are shown here to be perfectly acceptable as pets and hunters and muslims are permitted to eat animals and birds caught by them without having to go through any slaughter ritual. **Food:** see verse and footnote 2:168. See also verses 18:18; 18:22.

[225] **Mahr:** This is the groom's gift to the bride. See verse 2:236 and verse and footnote 17:32.

[226] **Committing excesses:** unreasonable and indecent behaviour, intemperate, lacking in self-control, going beyond excesses, lacking in self-restraint. (Arabic: *safaha.* Root S'F'H). See verses 4:24; 4:25; 24:4. **Drifter:** see verse and footnote 15:42.

[227] **Keeping** clean is an important task to be undertaken daily, for your own benefit and for the benefit of others. These are the minimum requirements for a clean body. See verse 4:43; 7:31.

[228] **Everyone** has in their conscience an instinctive knowledge about right and wrong. Throughout history guidance was revealed to mankind as mercy form God, and the Quran now consummates and confirms it all. The majority of people ignore this, become preoccupied with their 'idols' and defiantly say 'We hear but do not obey', as did the Children of Israel when they worshipped the calf instead of keeping their promise to serve God. However, those who possess intelligence understand that the revelation of the Quran is taking place as they read and recite it. He completes this favour on you when you receive His guidance, and that is the day His Deen-Islam is perfected for you. You then should enter into an agreement, a contract (or covenant) with God as you accept this Guidance and say: *"I (or) We hear and obey."* God's design is to purify and elevate

DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS

[5:8] O you who believe, you shall be absolutely fair and observe God's guidance when you serve as witnesses. Do not be provoked by your conflicts with some people into committing injustice. You shall be completely equitable because it safeguards your righteousness. You shall follow God's guidance. God is fully aware of everything you do.

[5:9] God promises those who follow this guidance and lead life of good works, protection and a great recompense.
[5:10] As for those who disbelieve and reject Our guidance, they will abide in a hell of their own making.
[5:11] O you who believe, remember God's blessings upon you; when some people extended their hands to aggress against you, He protected you and withheld their hands. You shall follow God's guidance; in God the believers shall trust.

CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AND THEIR COVENANT

[5:12] God had taken a covenant from the Children of Israel and We raised among them twelve patriarchs. And God said, "I am with you, so long as you observe your commitments,[229] and keep them pure and believe in My messengers and respect them and continue to send forth to God actions of righteousness. I will then remit your wrongdoing and admit you into harmony and tranquillity. Anyone who disbelieves after this has indeed strayed off the right path."
[5:13] It was a consequence of their violating their promises that We condemned them and We allowed their hearts to become hardened. Consequently, they twisted the meanings of words and disregarded some of the commandments given to them. You will continue to witness treachery from them excepting a few of them. You shall pardon them and disregard them. God cares for those who are benevolent.
[5:14] Also from those who said, "We are the Nasara, the helpers of Jesus," We took their covenant. But they disregarded some of the commandments given to them. Consequently, they descended into animosity and hatred among themselves until the Day of Resurrection. God will then inform them of everything they have done.

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every individual by putting them through certain challenges that can be overcome by implementing the Permanent Values in the Quran. You take an ablution to cleanse yourself physically and spiritually to prepare for your commitments as instructed in verse 5.6. The continuous purity of the Self takes place by the activation of good deeds. See verses 2:93; 2:285; 5:3-7. The declaration made is a reminder and an affirmation that a covenant exists between God and you and that you assent to it. See verse and footnote 5:1-7; 7:172; 48:10; 57:8; 76:7.

[229] **Commitment**s (Arabic: *solaa*) the Children of Israel made a covenant with God and were obliged to keep it. See footnote to verse 2:3.

GOD'S MESSAGE TO THOSE WHO PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED GUIDANCE

[5:15] O people of the scripture, Our messenger has come to you to proclaim for you many things you have concealed in your scriptures and to pardon many other transgressions you have committed. A beacon has come to you from God and a profound guidance.

[5:16] With it God guides those who seek His approval. He guides them to the path of peace, leads them out of the darkness and into the light in harmony with His principles and guides them in a straight and balanced path.

[5:17] Rejecters indeed are those who say that the messiah, the son of Mary, is God. Say: "Who could oppose God if He willed to annihilate the messiah, his mother Mary and everyone on earth?" To God belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and everything between. He creates whatever He wills. God is All-powerful.

[5:18] The Jews and the Christians say, "We are God's children and His beloved." Say: "Why then does He punish you for your wrongdoing? You are just people like the other humans He created." He protects whomever He wills and punishes whomever He wills according to His ordinance. To God belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and everything between them and to Him is your final return.

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ROAM AIMLESSLY

[5:19] O people of the scripture, Our messenger has come to you, to explain things to you after a period of time without messengers, lest you say, "We did not receive a messenger with good news or someone to warn us." A messenger and a warner has now come to you. Remember God is most powerful.

[5:20] Recall that Moses said to his people, "O my people, remember God's favours upon you: He appointed messengers from among you, made you rulers and granted you what He never granted to any other people.

[5:21] "O my people, enter the consecrated land that God has decreed for you and do not rebel, lest you become losers."

[5:22] They said, "O Moses, there are powerful people in it and we will not enter it unless they move out. Only if they leave, will we enter."

[5:23] Two men who were reverent and blessed by God said, "Just enter the gate. If you just enter it, you will surely prevail. You must trust in God, if you are believers."

[5:24] They said, "O Moses, we will never enter it, so long as they are in it. Therefore go, you and your Sustainer and fight. We will stay here."

[5:25] He said, "My Sustainer, I can only control myself and my brother. So, allow us to part company with these wicked people."

[5:26] He said, "Henceforth, settlement is forbidden for them for forty years, during which they will roam the earth aimlessly. Do not grieve over such wicked people."

THE SONS OF ADAM - MURDER CONDEMNED

[5:27] Recite for them the true history of Adam's two sons. They made an offering and it was accepted from one of them but not from the other, who said, "I will surely kill you." He said, "God accepts only from the righteous.
[5:28] "If you extend your hand to kill me, I will not extend my hand to kill you. For I reverence God, Sustainer of the universe.
[5:29] "I want you, not me, to bear the wrong you do me as your transgression, then you will end up living a life of hell. Such is the reward for those who transgress."
[5:30] His ego provoked him into killing his brother. He murdered him and ended up with the losers.
[5:31] God then sent a raven to scratch the soil, to teach him how to bury his brother's corpse. He said, "Misery to me; I failed to be as able as this raven and bury my brother's body." He became ridden with remorse.

[5:32] Because of this We decreed for the Children of Israel that anyone who kills a person, other than unintentional or lawful killing, it shall be as if he slaughtered all mankind. And anyone who saves a life, it shall be as if he saved the lives of all mankind. Our messengers went to them with clear proofs and revelations but most of them, even after receiving guidance, are still transgressors.

PUNISHMENT FOR TREACHERY

[5:33] The just retribution for those who forcefully strive against God and His guidance and relentlessly pursue corruption and criminal activities, is to be killed, crucified or to have their hands and feet cut off on alternate sides or to be exiled from the land. This is to humiliate them in this life then they suffer a far worse retribution in the life yet to come.
[5:34] Exempted are those who repent before you overcome them. You should know that God is Protector, Most Merciful.[230]
[5:35] O you who believe, you shall follow God's guidance and seek the ways and means to Him and strive in His cause, that you may succeed.

DISBELIEVERS FACE EVERLASTING RETRIBUTION

[5:36] Certainly those who disbelieve in this guidance, if they possessed everything on earth, even twice as much and offered it as ransom to spare

[230] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.

them the retribution on the Day of Reckoning, it will not be accepted from them; they have incurred a painful retribution.
[5:37] They will want to exit their hell but unfortunately they can never exit from there; their retribution is eternal.

PUNISHMENT FOR A THIEF

[5:38] The convicted thief, male or female, you shall restrict their ability to commit further misdeeds;[231] as a punishment for their crime and to serve as an example from God. God is Almighty, Most Wise.
[5:39] If one repents after committing a crime and reforms, God redeems him. God is Protector, Most Merciful.[232]
[5:40] Do you not know that God possesses the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth? He punishes whomever He wills according to His ordinance and protects whomever He wills according to His ordinance. God is All-powerful.

BELIEVERS ONLY THOSE WHO ACCEPT THIS GUIDANCE

[5:41] O messenger, do not grieve for those who hasten to disbelieve among each other and say, "We believe," with their mouths, while in their hearts they do not believe. Among the Jews some listened to such lies. They listened to people who never met you and who twisted the words out of context, then said, "If you are given what we are familiar with, accept it, but if you are given anything different, beware." Whomever God allows to divert, you can do nothing to help him against God. God's law does not incline to cleanse such hearts. They have incurred humiliation in this world and in the life yet to come they will suffer a terrible retribution.

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[231] **In traditional** translations this verse usually reads 'cut *off* their hands'. However, this is an idiom, and idioms we know have figurative meanings that are different from the literal meanings. Just as we might say in English, 'His hands are tied' but do not mean that the person has been bound by a rope, but that he is restricted in what he can do. Similarly, in this verse 'cut their hands' does not mean to sever, it means to restrict their ability to commit further crimes, that is to *'cut off* their *resources*', for committing theft. The next verse 5:39 speaks about repentance, living a useful life after repenting may be difficult without one or both hands. Those who lapse into criminal activity should be assisted in returning to a good and useful life. **The principle** that underpins the *Quranic justice* system is that it allows everyone and anyone capable of reforming and having reformed a second chance. **Furthermore,** Joseph did not sever his brother's hand who was accused and 'convicted' of stealing, and he followed the Deen-Islam of his forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. And they all followed guidance from God, in which there is no change. Also according to verse 12:7, in Joseph's history there are lessons for those who seek guidance. See verses 12:70-79 & verse 12:38. The injustice of *'cutting off* the thief's *hand'* has come from a fabricated hadith tradition that misconstrued the idiomatic verse 'cut off their *hands*'. Using the singular completely changed the meaning into a cruel and unjustified punishment instead of the compassion decreed in both verses 5:38 and 5:39. See also verses and footnotes 3:7; 4:42; 5:64; 68:37.
[232] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.

[5:42] They are upholders of lies and are greedy for their illicit earnings. If they come to you to judge among them, you may judge among them or you may disregard them. If you choose to disregard them, they cannot harm you in the least. But if you judge among them you shall judge equitably. God cares for those who are equitable.
[5:43] Why do they ask you to judge among them when they too have God's Law and yet they chose to disregard it? They are in truth not believers in God's law and guidance.
[5:44] We sent down the Taurah as a guidance and a beacon. Ruling in accordance with it were the messengers, as well as the rabbis and the priests, as dictated to them in God's scripture and as witnessed by them. Therefore, do not follow the laws of man as absolute authority, you shall do your duty to Me instead. And do not trade away My revelations for a cheap price. Those who do not rule in accordance with God's guidance are disbelievers: the rejecters of this guidance.[233]

THE UNJUST REJECT THIS GUIDANCE

[5:45] And We decreed for them in the Taurah: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth and an equivalent injury for any injury. If one forfeits what is due to him with sincerity, it will make reparation for his wrongdoings. Those who do not rule in accordance with God's revelations are the unjust.

[5:46] After them, We sent Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the previous scripture, the Taurah. We gave him the Injeel, a guidance and a light, that also confirmed the previous scripture, the Taurah and strengthening its guidance and a beacon to enlighten the righteous.[234]

THE EVIL REJECT THIS GUIDANCE

[5:47] The people of the Injeel shall rule in accordance with God's guidance. Those who do not rule in accordance with God's decrees are the ones who are evil.

THE QURAN: THE LAST WORD IN GOD'S LAW

[5:48] Then We revealed to you this book of guidance, truthfully, confirming previous scriptures and superseding them. You shall rule among them in accordance with God's guidance and do not follow their

[233] **Disbelievers** (Arabic: *kafir*) are those who take only part of this guidance or reject it totally. This includes individuals, societies and governments who apply laws other than those of the Quran.
[234] **The Taurah and the Injeel:** The Quran often refers to the Injeel and the Taurah as previous scriptures, but this is not a reference to the New and the Old Testaments of the present day Bible. See verse 62:5. The Injeel confirmed the Taurah (the Law) given to Moses, just as the Quran now confirms and encompasses all the previous revelation and guidance. See verse 3:3-4.

wishes if they differ from the truth that has come to you. For each of you, We have decreed laws and paths. Had God willed He could have made you one people. But He now puts you to the test through the guidance He has given each of you. You shall compete in good works. To God is your final return, all of you, then He will inform you of everything you had disputed.[235]
[5:49] You shall rule among them in accordance with God's guidance to you. Do not follow their wishes and beware lest they divert you from some of God's guidance to you. If they turn away then know that God wills to punish them for their wrongdoing. Indeed, many people do nothing but evil.
[5:50] Is it the law of the days of ignorance that they seek to uphold? Whose law is better than God's for those who seek to attain certainty?

SOME PEOPLE CANNOT BE FRIENDS

[5:51] O you who believe, do not take certain Jews and Christians as allies; these are allies of one another. Those among you who ally themselves with these belong with them. God does not guide the transgressors.
[5:52] You will see those who harbour doubt in their hearts hasten to join them, saying, "We fear lest we may be defeated." and it may happen that God brings victory or a command from Him that causes them to regret their innermost thoughts.
[5:53] The believers will then say, "Are these the same people who solemnly swore by God that they were with you?" Their good works have been nullified; they are the losers.
[5:54] O you who believe in this guidance, if you revert from this Deen, then God will substitute in your place people whom He cares for and who accept His guidance with pleasure. They will be kind with the believers, stern with the disbelievers and will strive in the cause of God without fear of any blame. Such is God's blessing. He bestows it upon whomever He wills. God is Bounteous and aware of all things.
[5:55] Your real strength is with God and adherence to this message, and with the believers who observe their commitments and keep them pure and they are also humble.
[5:56] Those who ally themselves with God and this message and those who believed belong to the party of God. Ultimately they are the victors.
[5:57] O you who believe do not be friends with some among those who received the previous scripture and who scorn and deride your Deen, nor shall you befriend those who disbelieve in this message. You shall keep your duty to God if you really are believers in this guidance,

[235] **Quran:** God's revealed guidance is the criteria for lawmaking and settling disputes. See also verses: 4:82; 6:114.

[5:58] and do this even though they may mock and ridicule you when you call on them to fulfil their commitments. This is because they are people who do not understand.[236]
[5:59] Say: "O people of the scripture, do you not hate us because we believe in accountability to God and in the guidance revealed to us, and in what was revealed before us, and because most of you do not do any good?"
[5:60] Say: "Let me tell you who are worse in the sight of God; those who are condemned by God after incurring His wrath until He made them contemptible as monkeys and pigs and those who accept authorities to rank with God. These are far worse and very far from the right path."
[5:61] When they come to you, they say, "We believe," even though they were full of disbelief when they came, and they are full of disbelief when they leave. God is fully aware of everything they conceal.
[5:62] You see many of them readily committing evil and transgression and greedily consuming their illicit earnings. Miserable indeed is what they do.
[5:63] If only their rabbis and their priests would forbid them from their evil talk and criminal gains. Miserable indeed is what they commit.

[5:64] The Jews even said, "God's hand is tied down!" But his hands are outspread and give freely according to His ordinance. They are condemned for speaking such a blasphemy. Instead His hands are wide open, spending as He wills. For certain, your Sustainer's guidance will cause many of them to plunge deeper into transgression and disbelief. Consequently, We have committed them to animosity and hatred among themselves until the Day of Reckoning. Whenever they ignite the flames of war, God puts them out. They roam the earth wickedly and God dislikes those who do evil.[237]

THIS GUIDANCE IS FOR ALL MANKIND

[5:65] If only the people of the scripture believe in this guidance and lead a righteous life, We will then remit their wrongdoings and admit them into a life of harmony.
[5:66] If only they would uphold the Taurah and the Injeel and what is sent down to them in this guidance from their Sustainer, they would be showered with blessings from above them and from beneath their feet. Some of them are righteous but many of them do evil.

THE MESSENGER MUST DELIVER ALL THE REVELATION

[5:67] O messenger, deliver the *complete* guidance revealed to you from your Sustainer, until you do, you have not conveyed His *entire* message. God

[236] **Disbelievers,** those who reject Deen-Islam, and have obligations to the muslims are called to fulfil them, but they do not think they will be held accountable by God and deride these requests.
[237] **God's generosity:** God does not have hands but the idiom used is easily understood and illustrates the views of some Jews and also the generosity of God. See verses and footnotes 3:7; 5:38.

will protect you from the wrongdoers. God does not guide the disbelieving people.[238]
[5:68] Say: "O people of the scripture, you have no basis until you uphold the Taurah, the Injeel and what is sent down to you from your Sustainer." No doubt, these revelations from your Sustainer will cause many of them to plunge deeper into transgression and disbelief. Therefore, do not feel sorry for the disbelieving people.
[5:69] Certainly those who believe, those who are Jews, the Sabians and the Nazarene; any of them who believe in accountability to God and believe in the Day of Reckoning and lead a life of good works have nothing to fear nor will they grieve.
[5:70] We have taken a covenant from the Children of Israel and We sent to them messengers. Whenever a messenger went to them with anything they disliked; some of them they rejected and some they killed.
[5:71] They thought that they would not be tested so they turned blind and deaf, then God redeemed them, but then many of them turned blind and deaf again. God is seer of all that they do.

JESUS TAUGHT SERVICE TO GOD ALONE

[5:72] Evil indeed are those who say that the messiah, son of Mary is God. The messiah himself said, "O Children of Israel, you shall serve God; my Sustainer and your Sustainer." Those who set up an authority to rank with God, God has forbidden for them a harmonious future and their conclusion is an eternal hell. The wicked have no helpers.
[5:73] Evil indeed are those who say that God is a third of a trinity. There is no authority to rank with the One God. Unless they refrain from saying this, those among them who disbelieve this guidance will incur a painful retribution.[239]
[5:74] Would they not repent to God and ask His protection? God is Protector and Most Merciful.[240]
[5:75] The messiah, son of Mary, is no more than a messenger like the messengers before him and his mother was a righteous woman. Both of them ate food like all other people. Note how We explain the revelations for them and note how they still deviate.
[5:76] Say: "Would you serve beside God powerless deities, helpless idols and corrupt authorities who in reality can neither harm you nor benefit you? God hears all things and knows all that you do."
[5:77] Say: "O people of the scripture, do not transgress the limits of this Deen beyond the truth and do not follow the opinions of people who have

[238] Complete, entire (Arabic: *balagata.* Root B'L'GH). See verse and footnote 46:35.
[239] **Trinity:** the state of being three. See verse and footnote 4:171.
[240] **Repentance**: what is it? See verse 9:112.

gone adrift and have misled multitudes of people. They are far astray from the right path."[241]
[5:78] Condemned by David and Jesus, the son of Mary, are those who disbelieved among the Children of Israel. This is because they disobeyed and transgressed.
[5:79] They did not discourage one another from committing evil. Miserable indeed is what they did.
[5:80] You see many of them allying themselves with those who disbelieve. Miserable indeed is what their hands have sent forth on behalf of their Self. God sees their guilt and consequently they will abide forever in retribution.
[5:81] Had they believed in God and the messenger and in what was revealed to him in this guidance, they would not have befriended them. But many of them are evil.
[5:82] You will find that the worst enemies of the believers are from the Jews and those who set up authorities to rank with God. And you will find that the closest people in friendship to the believers are those who say, "We are the followers of Jesus." This is because they have teachers and preachers among them who are not too arrogant to accept this guidance.
[5:83] When they hear what was revealed to the messenger, you see their eyes swell with tears as they recognise the truth in here and they say, "Our Sustainer, we have believed in this, so count us among the witnesses.
[5:84] "Why should we not believe in God and in the truth that has come to us and hope that our Sustainer may admit us with the righteous people?"
[5:85] God has rewarded them for saying this; He will admit them into harmony and serenity. They abide therein forever. Such is the reward for the righteous.
[5:86] As for those who disbelieve and reject Our guidance, they are the dwellers in a hell of their own making.

DO NOT PROHIBIT WHAT GOD HAS NOT

[5:87] O you who believe, do not prohibit good things that are made lawful by God and do not aggress; God dislikes the aggressors.[242]
[5:88] And eat from the good and lawful things that God has provided for you. You shall reverence God, to whom you are accountable.

DO NOT TAKE GOD'S NAME IN FALSE OATHS

[5:89] God does not hold you responsible for the mere expression of any oath. He holds you responsible for your actual intentions. If you violate an

[241] **Drifter:** a person influenced by opinions outside his own mind. See verse and footnote 15:42.
[242] **Only** restrictions given in the Quran should be followed, whether its food, clothing and other things. Those made by religious leaders and authorities other than God must be rejected. Don't forbid what God has not. See verses 10:59; 16:115.

oath, you shall atone by feeding ten poor people from the same food you offer to your own family or clothing them or by freeing a captive or a slave. If you cannot afford this, then you shall discipline yourself by practicing Self-restraint for three days. This is the atonement for violating the oaths that you swore to keep. You shall fulfil your oaths. God thus explains His revelations to you that you may be appreciative.[243]

INTOXICANTS, DIVINATION AND IDLE TIME

[5:90] O you who believe, abuse of intoxicants, idle time, the devotion to stones and icons and acts of divination are abominations of the egotistic Self; you shall avoid them, so that you may prosper.[244]

[5:91] The egotistic Self provokes animosity and hatred within you through intoxicants and idle time and distracts you from remembering God and from observing your commitments. Will you not then refrain from its abuse?

[5:92] You shall obey God and you shall obey the messenger and beware. If you turn away, then know that the sole duty of Our messenger is to deliver the complete message.

[5:93] Those who believe and lead a righteous life bear no guilt by eating any food so long as they observe these commandments, believe and lead a righteous life, then maintain their piety and conviction and continue to observe piety and righteousness. God cares for the righteous.[245]

SEAFOOD, WILDLIFE AND GAME CONSERVATION

[5:94] O you who believe, God may test you with some game within reach of your hands and within your means. God thus distinguishes those among you who observe His laws, while He is unseen. Those who transgress after this have incurred a painful retribution.[246]

[5:95] O you who believe, do not kill wildlife during the restricted periods. Anyone who kills any game on purpose his penalty shall be a number of livestock animals that are equivalent to the game animals he killed. The

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[243] **Self-restraint**, Self-discipline, abstain: (Arabic: *sawma* Root: S'W'M). See verses 5:96 & 2:183.

[244] **Divination:** fortune telling, predictions, betting on sports results etc. This does not mean 'taking risk' is forbidden - decreed as *haram* - but the clear instruction here is to avoid superstitions such as astrology, palm readings and games of chance (gambling on horses, dogs or in casinos) due to the devastation it can cause, not only to the individual who takes part, but also to the family concerned. However, to decree all speculative ventures as *haram* would mean that 'calculated business risk' would also be forbidden and many transactions based on future stock (such as crops) could not take place. **Intoxicants/ idle time**: see verses 4:43; 2:219; 12:49; 16-67. When God restricts or forbids something He uses the word *haram.* See verses 7:33; 10:59; 16:115-116.

[245] **Food:** verse 2:168. **Stone worship:** verse 37:95. **Divination:** fortune telling etc. verse 6:50.

[246] **Imposing** conservation laws to protect wildlife are part of the restriction in the system: the sanctions of the submissions to God. The open and closed hunting seasons (5:96-97) can be set according to the animals cycle of life. See also verse 5:2-5.

judgment shall be set by two equitable men from among you. They will assess the ankles[247] of the animal to see if the killed game had reached maturity; if not, the offender may expiate by feeding poor people or by a Self-restraint discipline to atone for his violation. God has pardoned past offences. But if anyone returns to such a transgression, God will punish him. God is Almighty and punishes most severely.
[5:96] All water game is made lawful for you to eat. This can provide lawful food for you during your journeys. You shall not hunt throughout the restricted periods. You shall reverence God, before whom you will be summoned.

[5:97] God has set the hunting guidelines and indicators by the ankles of the animals; the conservation in the Sanctioned System to be upheld for mankind during the restricted months. This is to let you know that God knows everything in the heavens and the earth and what lies beneath the earth. And certainly God is fully aware of all things.
[5:98] Remember that God is strict in enforcing retribution and that God is Protector, most Merciful.

THE SOLE DUTY OF THE MESSENGER

[5:99] The sole duty of the messenger is to deliver this complete message and God knows everything you declare and everything you conceal.

[5:100] Proclaim: "The evil and the good are not alike, even if the abundance of evil amazes you. You shall fulfil your duty to God, those who possess intelligence and understanding, that you may succeed."

[5:101] O you who believe, do not ask about matters which if revealed to you prematurely, would hurt you. If you ask about them in light of the Quran, they will become apparent to you. God deliberately pardoned these things. God is Protector, most Clement.[248]
[5:102] Others before you have asked the same questions, then became disbelievers therein.

[5:103] God did not institute superstitions about certain kinds of animals or sacrifices for twin births in your livestock or even any other such vulgar beliefs. It is those who do not believe in this guidance who invented such lies about God. Most of them do not understand.

[247] **Ankles** or a lower part of an animal will be strong in mature animals. The penalty for killing immature game will be greater and those in judgment will decide. See also verse 5:97.
[248] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). This verse clearly shows that all matters must be resolved in the light of the Quranic guidance. See verse and footnote 2:185.

FOLLOWING PARENTS BLINDLY: A TRAGEDY

[5:104] When they are told, "Come to what God has revealed and to the messenger," they say, "What we found our parents doing is sufficient for us." What if their parents were unaware and not guided?[249]

[5:105] O you who believe, you should worry only about your own Self. If the others go astray they cannot hurt you, as long as you are guided. To God is your ultimate return, all of you, then He will inform you of everything you have done.

WITNESSING A WILL AND OBSERVING COMMITMENTS

[5:106] O you who believe, witnessing a will when death approaches one of you shall be done by two equitable men from your acquaintances. If you are travelling, then two men with whom you are not acquainted may do the witnessing. After observing this commitment,[250] the witnesses should swear by God, to alleviate your doubts: "We will not use this to attain personal gains, even if the testator is related to us. Nor will we conceal God's testimony. Otherwise, we would do wrong."

[5:107] If the witnesses are suspected of bias or perjury, then two others shall take their places. Choose two men who are credible and let them swear by God: "Our testimony is more truthful than theirs; we will not be biased. Otherwise we will be transgressors."

[5:108] This is more apt to encourage an honest testimony on their part, fearing that their oath may be disregarded like that of the previous witnesses. You shall observe God and listen. God does not guide those who do evil.

THE MESSENGERS ARE TOTALLY UNAWARE OF HOW PEOPLE BEHAVE AFTER THEM

[5:109] The day will come when God will summon the messengers and ask them, "How was the response to you?" They will say, "We have no knowledge. You are the knower of all secrets."

[5:110] God will say, "O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My favours upon you and your mother. I supported you with the Ruh-il-qudus: the Sacred Energy, to enable you to speak to your people as a child as well as in maturity. I taught you the guidance, good judgment, the Taurah and the Injeel. Recall that you made from clay the shape of a bird, then blew into it and it became a live bird, by My leave. You healed the blind and the leprous, by My leave and revived the dead, by My leave. Recall that I protected you

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[249] **Following** your parents blindly is one of the greatest human tragedies. Not long after your birth, they decide your name, nationality, religion and sect. And you spend the rest of your life defending something you did not even choose. See verse 37:74.

[250] **Commitment:** (Arabic: *solaa*). Those who witness a will have obligated themselves to certain commitments which they are required to keep. See footnote to verse 2:3.

from the Children of Israel who wanted to hurt you, despite the profound signs you had shown them. The disbelievers among them said, `These are nothing but illusions.'[251]
[5:111] "Recall that I inspired the disciples of Jesus: `You shall believe in Me and My messenger.' They said, `We have believed and bear witness that we are submitters.' "

THE FEAST: A GREAT SIGN BRINGS GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

[5:112] Recall that the disciples said, "O Jesus, son of Mary, can your Sustainer produce for us a feast from above?" He said, "You should do your duty to God, if you are believers."[252]
[5:113] They said, "We want to eat to reassure our hearts and to know for certain that you have told us the truth. We will serve as witnesses to it."
[5:114] Then Jesus, the son of Mary, said, "Our God, our Sustainer give us a feast. Let it be plenty for each and every one of us and a sign from You. Provide for us; You are the best provider."
[5:115] God said, "I will provide a feast for you all. Anyone among you who disbelieves after this, I will punish him as I never punished anyone else."

JESUS AND HIS MOTHER NOT EQUAL TO GOD

[5:116] God will ask, "O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to any people, `Take me and my mother as authorities equal to God?' " He will respond, "Be You glorified. I could not speak what was not true. Had I said it, You already would have known it. You know my thoughts and I do not know Your thoughts. You know all the secrets.
[5:117] "I told them only what You commanded me to say that, `You shall serve God, my Sustainer and your Sustainer.' I was a witness among them for as long as I lived with them. When You terminated my life on earth, You became the watcher over them. You witness all things.
[5:118] "If You punish them, they are Your servants. If You protect them, You are the Almighty, Most Wise."
[5:119] God will proclaim, "This is a day when the sincere will be saved by their truthfulness." They have deserved a place of peace and serenity. They abide therein forever. God is satisfied with them and they are content with Him. This is the greatest achievement.
[5:120] To God belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and everything in them and He has power over all things.

[251] **Ruh-il-Qudus:** the Sacred Energy. Ruh is the directive force *from* God, but not *of* God. See verse 4:171. One characteristic of gifted children is advanced language ability, and Jesus was undoubtedly an exceptionally gifted child that he spoke at an early age. See verse 19:29.
[252] **Feast.** (Arabic: *eid*). A large lavish meal, typically a celebratory one.

Sura 6: The Livestock (Al-An'am)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[6:1] Praise be to God who created the heavens and the earth, allowed the depths of darkness and spread the brightness of enlightenment. Yet, those who disbelieve in this guidance from their Sustainer continue to deviate.

PRIMORDIAL CLAY: THE START OF LIFE

[6:2] He is the One who created you from clay,[253] then directed you, determined a specific period for you and set another period to follow. Yet, you continue to doubt.

[6:3] He is the One God in the heavens and the earth. He knows your secrets and your declarations and He knows everything you earn by your deeds.

[6:4] No matter what kind of proof comes to them from their Sustainer, they turn away from it in aversion.

[6:5] Since they reject the truth when it comes to them, they will soon learn the reality of their heedlessness.

[6:6] Have they not seen how many generations before them We have annihilated? We established them on earth more than We did for you and We gave them many favours, generously and We provided them with abundant rain. We then annihilated them because of their wrongdoing and We substituted other generations in their place.

[6:7] Even if We sent down to you a physical book written on paper and they touched it with their hands, those who disbelieve would have said, "This is no more than a clever illusion."

[6:8] They also said, "If only an angel could come down with him." Had We sent a malaika to accompany you, the whole matter would have been settled there and then and no respite would have been granted.[254]

[6:9] If We did send a malaika, We would have sent him in the form of a man and they would be just as perplexed as they are now.

[6:10] Messengers before you have been ridiculed. It is those who mocked them who suffered the consequences of their ridiculing.

[6:11] Say: "Travel the world and note the consequences of those who reject this guidance."[255]

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[253] **Primordial clay:** a substance in the primordial soup with self-replicating crystal catalyst sparking the first form of life billions of years ago. See verse and footnote 36:82.

[254] **Angel:** Those who have no proper knowledge believe the malaika to be female angels, the mythical winged creatures from religious traditions. In some selected verses the word '*malaika*' has been translated as 'angel' purely for illustrative purposes to show that while they say *malaika*, their expectation and belief is an angel. See verses and footnotes 2:30; 11:12; 12:31; 17:92; 25:7; 25:21; 45:14.

[6:12] Ask this question, "To whom belongs everything in the heavens and the earth?" Say: "To God." He has decreed mercy[256] as one of His attributes. He will surely summon you all on the Day of Resurrection which is inevitable. The ones who lose their Self are those who do not believe in this guidance.
[6:13] To Him belongs everything that dwells in the night and the day. He is the one who hears all things and the one who knows all things.
[6:14] Say: "Shall I accept other than God as my Sustainer and Protector when He is the initiator of the heavens and the earth and He feeds all but is not fed?" Say: "I am commanded to be a devoted submitter and not to serve anyone as an authority equal to God."
[6:15] Say: "If I disobey my Sustainer I fear the penalty of an awesome day.
[6:16] "Whoever is spared the retribution on that day has attained His grace. And this is the greatest triumph."
[6:17] If God touches you with adversity, none can relieve it except He. And if He bestows you with a blessing, He has power over all things.
[6:18] He is Supreme over His creatures. He is the Most Wise and aware of all things.

QURAN: THE TESTIMONY OF GOD

[6:19] Say: "Whose testimony is greater?" Say: "God's. He is the witness between me and you that this Quran has been inspired to me, to develop you and whomever it reaches. Indeed, if they bear witness that there is another authority to equal the One God." Say: "I do not testify as you do. There is only One God and I reject all authority that you set up to rank with Him."[257]
[6:20] Those to whom We have given the scriptures recognise this as they recognise their own children. The ones who lose their Self are those who do not believe in this guidance.
[6:21] Who is more evil than one who lies about God or rejects His revelations? The transgressors never succeed.

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[255] **Fear and turmoil** around the world is an obvious consequence of not following the harmonising System enshrined in the Quran: the Deen-Islam.
[256] **Mercy:** a discipline God maintains. This mercy is not a reprieve from punishment but it is like the balm that heals the wound, should a person return to guidance and repair the damage to his Self and thus redeem himself. See verses and footnotes 6:54; 85:16.
[257] **Quran:** Whose testimony is greater than God's revealed guidance? (Arabic: *akbaru shahadatan*). 9:72; 29:45. To accept other conflicting laws (or books of law) is the same as accepting an authority as equal or to rival God. This is shirk: treason or treachery against God. Witness: see verse 63:1; 6:19. See also verses 4:82; 6:114. 9:1-10; 39:23. **Great:** supreme, majestic, elite, important, exalted, elder/leader/chief. (Arabic: *akbar* Root K'B'R. Derivatives: *akbara, akbaru, yakbaroo*). See verses and footnotes God's greatness: 9:72; 29:45. Greater 10:61. Great challenge: 9:3. and 7:75.

PEOPLE DENY SETTING UP RIVALS TO RANK WITH GOD

[6:22] On the day when We summon them all We will ask those who set up authorities to rival God, "Where now are those whom you followed?"[258]

[6:23] Their disastrous response will be: "By God, our Sustainer We never followed any other guidance."

[6:24] Note how they lied to themselves and how the authorities they invented have abandoned them.

[6:25] Some of them listen to you but over time their hearts become veiled and they become impervious to understanding and in their ears is a deafness. Thus, no matter what kind of proof they see, they cannot believe in this guidance. And when they come to argue with you, the disbelievers say, "These are simply stories from the past."[259]

[6:26] They divert others from this guidance as they themselves stay away from it, but they only destroy themselves without perceiving.

[6:27] If only you could see them when they face their hell. They would then say: "Oh, we wish we could go back and we had never rejected our Sustainer's guidance and be like those who believed."

[6:28] As a matter of fact they only say this because their ill deeds have been exposed. If they were to be given a second chance they would commit exactly the same crimes. They are liars.[260]

[6:29] They say without thinking, "We live only this life; we will not be resurrected."

[6:30] If you could only see them when they stand before their Sustainer. He will say, "Is this not the truth?" They will say, "Yes, by our Sustainer." He will say, "You have incurred the retribution because of your disbelief."

[6:31] Losers indeed are those who disbelieve in their accountability to God, until the time comes all of a sudden then they say, "We deeply regret wasting our lives in this world." They will carry a very heavy load of their wrongdoing; what a miserable burden they have.

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[258] **Setting up an authority** to rival or rank with God. Any person who does this is known as a traitor: a person who commits treason. (Arabic: *mushriq,* one who commits shirk.) **People who follow** rules and regulations (spurious hadith, cultural shariah laws etc.) conflicting with Quranic decrees have accepted those who make these laws as an authority to equal God and are therefore mushrikeen, i.e. those who commit shirk: high treason, the most treacherous of all crimes, to accept an authority to rival God. However, here it is clear that they don't believe they have done any wrong and deny vehemently that they followed anything other than God's guidance. See verses and footnotes 2:105; 9:1-10. See also 31:6; 39:23; 68:37 and also 15:42.

[259] **A person becomes** impervious to guidance: when an individual rejects guidance or witnesses an injustice and does not act to stop it, the character becomes passive and receptive to criminal activities, eventually losing the ability to understand or defend the truth, and even those they love. See verses 2:6,7; 4:155; 10:33; 30:59.

[260] **When caught,** most people say they are sorry, not because they have any genuine remorse, but because they have been found out and in reality they will never change their ways.

CHANGE YOUR PRIORITIES - IMPROVE YOUR LIFE

[6:32] The life of this world is no more than a passing event and show of vanities while the coming life is far better for those who do good. Do you not understand?

[6:33] We know that you may be saddened by what they say. You should know that it is not you that they reject, it is God's guidance that the wicked disregard.

[6:34] Messengers before you have been rejected and they steadfastly persevered in the face of persecution. They were victimised until Our victory came to them. Such is God's System that does not change. The history of My messengers thus sets the precedent for you.

[6:35] If their rejection gets to be too much for you, you should know that even if you dug a tunnel through the earth or climbed a ladder into the sky and produced a miracle for them, they still would not believe. Had God willed, He could have guided them. Therefore, do not be like those who are ignorant.

[6:36] The only ones to respond are those who listen. God resurrects the dead; they ultimately return to Him.

[6:37] They said, "If only a certain sign could come down to him from his Sustainer" Say: "God is able to send down a sign but most of them do not know."

QURAN: COMPLETE AND PERFECT GUIDANCE

[6:38] All the creatures on earth and all the birds that fly with wings are communities like you. We did not leave anything out of this book.[261] To their Sustainer all these creatures will be summoned.

[6:39] Those who reject Our proofs become as those who are deaf, dumb and in total darkness. God allows some to move astray in accordance with His ordinance and others He leads in a straight and balanced path that is also determined by His ordinance[262]

[6:40] Say: "What if God's retribution came to you or the time of reckoning came to you: would you implore other than God, if you are truthful?"

[6:41] The fact is only to Him you implore and only He can answer your supplications, if He so wills. And in time of great need you forget those whom you set up to rank with God.

[6:42] We have sent messengers to communities before you and We put them through similar tests of adversity and hardship that they may become humble and develop their Self.

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[261] **All necessary** guidance for the progress and welfare of individuals and societies is contained in the Quran: a complete guidance and no other book can replace it. However, books that make laws or give guidance within the parameters of the Quran are acceptable. See verses 4:82 & 16:69.

[262] **God's will** is the law of requital that works within His ordinance; your actions determine your outcome. Good works produce good results.

[6:43] If only they had been able to endure it all when put through their paces. Instead their hearts were hardened and their ego made what they did seem good in their eyes.
[6:44] When they disregard the guidance given to them We open the gates for them. Then just as they rejoice in what was given to them, We punish them suddenly and they become utterly stunned.[263]
[6:45] The wicked are thus annihilated. Praise be to God, Sustainer of the universe.
[6:46] Say: "What if God took away your hearing and your eyesight and sealed your minds, which god, other than the One God can restore these for you?" See how We explain the guidance and see how they still deviate.
[6:47] Say: "What if God's retribution came to you suddenly or after a warning. Is it not the wicked who incur annihilation?"

MESSENGERS: WARNERS & BEARERS OF GOOD NEWS

[6:48] We do not send Our messengers except as bearers of good news as well as to give warnings. Those who believe in this guidance and apply it in their lives have nothing to fear nor will they grieve.
[6:49] As for those who reject Our guidance, they incur severe punishment for their wickedness.
[6:50] Say: "I do not say to you that I possess the treasures of God. Nor do I know the future. Nor do I say to you that I am a malaika. I simply follow what is given to me by inspiration." Say: "Is the one who is blind the same as the one who can see? Do you not think and contemplate?"[264]
[6:51] And teach with this guidance to those who consider the summoning before their sustainer, they have none beside Him as Sustainer or protector or an intercessor that they may stay away from evil and attain esteem.
[6:52] And do not dismiss those who humble themselves before their Sustainer day and night devoting themselves to Him alone. You are not responsible for their reckoning nor are they responsible for your reckoning. If you dismiss them, you will be a transgressor.
[6:53] We thus test some people through each other and even allow them mockingly to say "Are these the people among us who are blessed by God?" Do they think that God is not aware of those who show appreciation?
[6:54] When those who believe in Our guidance come to you, you shall say: "Salamun Alaikum: Peace be upon you."[265] The One who sustains you has

[263] **The guilty** are given enough rope and they eagerly hang themselves. People can choose to live in a world of comforting illusions until a smack of reality hits them.
[264] **The messenger** followed the Quran and Quran alone and so should the believers. To follow any other guidance that contradicts it is shirk; the setting up authorities to rank with God. See verses 27:92; 43:43; 46:9; 79:46. **Messenger** cannot tell the future. See verse 7:187-188.
[265] **Salamun alaikum:** Peace be upon you. (Arabic: *salamun*: from the root: S'L'M. *salamun, islam, muslim*). The best salutation that anyone can give or receive. To sincerely want peace for your fellow

decreed for himself mercy as an attribute. Thus when anyone among you who commits a transgression out of ignorance and repents thereafter and reforms, then He is Protector, Most Merciful."[266]
[6:55] We thus explain the revelations and point out the ways of the wicked.
[6:56] Say: "I am forbidden from serving whom you serve besides God." Say: "I will not follow your opinions. Otherwise I will be adrift and not be guided."
[6:57] Say: "I rest on unyielding proof from my Sustainer and you have rejected it. I do not control the retribution you challenge me to bring. Judgment belongs with God. He narrates the truth and He is the best judge."
[6:58] Say: "If I controlled the retribution you challenge me to bring the whole matter would have been terminated long ago. God knows best, who the wicked are."

ALL PROBABILITIES DETERMINED BY GOD

[6:59] With God is the knowledge of things that are not yet evident; no one knows them except He. He knows everything on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls without His knowledge.[267] Nor is there a grain in the depths of the soil, nor is there anything wet or dry that is not recorded in a profound record.

DEATH AND RESURRECTION: A DAILY OCCURRENCE

[6:60] He is the One who puts you to a death of sleep during the night and knows even the smallest of your actions during the day. He resurrects you to life every morning until your life span is completed, then to Him is your ultimate return. He will then inform you of everything you had done.[268]
[6:61] He is supreme over His creations and He has structured ways to protect you. When the appointed time of the final death comes to any of you, Our messengers[269] cause him to expire without the least delay.

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being means that you will not do or say anything to create fear and turmoil in their life. There are no better greetings or farewells than this. See verse 4:86. **God condemns** those who do not greet others with a greeting of peace, it means they may have some mischief in their heart. See verse 58:8. **Greetings of peace:** see verses 10:10; 13:24; 14:23; 19:47; 28:55; 33:44; 39:73; 43:89; 51:25. See also 11:69; 19:33; 25:63. **God** has decreed for himself mercy as an attribute: see verse and footnote 8:16.

[266] **Mercy is** not absolution from 'sin' but the repair mechanism for the damage caused by wrongdoing. It is the respite period for doing good that heals all wounds. An example of this would be a burn caused by a fire, mercy would be the balm and the treatment of the injury. The greater the burn: the longer it will take to heal. See verse 85:16. **God has decreed mercy** as one of His attributes. This is obviously self-imposed as everything that God does, emanates from God and cannot be external. See verses and footnotes 1:5; 17:100; 85:16. **Repentance:** what is it? See verses 9:112.

[267] **God has created** and directed: His laws determine all the probabilities and outcomes. While we still have freedom to choose, God knows the choice we will make and the consequences of that choice. See verses and footnotes 9:51; 57:22.

[268] **Good organisers** plan for the next day before they go to sleep. People who understand that death, like sleep, is just a transition to the next part of a continuous life, prepare for it.

[269] **Messengers:** these are the malaika that bring death.

[6:62] Then everyone is returned to God their rightful Sustainer and Patron. Absolutely He is the patron of truth and He is the most swift evaluator of all things.
[6:63] Say: "Who can save you from the darkness of the land or the sea?" You implore Him loudly and secretly: "If He saves us this time we will be eternally appreciative."
[6:64] Say: "God does save you this time and many other times as well, then you still set up rival authorities to rank with Him."[270]
[6:65] Say: "He is certainly able to pour upon you retribution from above you or raise it from beneath your feet. He can divide you into disputing factions and have you taste each others' tyranny. See how We reiterate and explain this guidance that you may understand."
[6:66] Your people have rejected this guidance even though it is the truth. Say: "I am not a guardian over you."
[6:67] Everything has its term and you will surely find out this to be right.

SHOW REVERENCE FOR THE WORD OF GOD

[6:68] If you see those who ridicule this guidance you shall avoid them until they change to another discussion.[271] If you forget, then do so as soon as you remember; do not sit with such evil people.
[6:69] The righteous are not responsible for the utterances of those people who do wrong but it may help to remind them, and perhaps they may change.
[6:70] You shall disregard those who take this Deen frivolously and in vain and are totally charmed by this world. Remind them with this guidance lest a Self may suffer the consequences of its wicked earnings. They have none beside God as sustainer and protector nor as an intercessor. If they could offer any kind of ransom, it will not be accepted from them. They suffer the consequences of the evil works they earn, they deserve horrifying drinks and a painful retribution because of their disbelief in this guidance.
[6:71] Say: "Shall we implore, beside God, those who possess no power to benefit us or hurt us and turn back on our heels after God has guided us? In that case we would join those possessed by the devils and rendered utterly confused, while their friends try to save them. Stay with us on the right path." Say: "God's guidance is the right guidance. We are commanded to submit to the Sustainer of the universe.
[6:72] "And to observe our commitments and are accountable to Him alone. He is the One before whom you will be summoned for the reckoning."

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[270] **Authorities** that rival God's sovereignty. Verses 6:61-64. **God's system** is Deen-Islam as decreed in the Quran and only in the Quran. Anything else is not God's system. Political, religious or any other systems that are inconsistent with the Quran are not acceptable to God as they conflict with God's authority. See verse 3:85. **Patron.** (Arabic: *maula*). See verses and footnotes 2:28; 22:78..
[271] **Discussion/discourse:** (Arabic: *hadith*). See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.

[6:73] He is the One who created the heavens and the earth, truthfully. Whenever He creates, He only has to will it to "Be" and it is. His word is the absolute truth. All sovereignty belongs to Him on the day the sound of obliteration is heard. Knower of all secrets and declarations, He is the Most judicious and aware of all things.[272]

ABRAHAM REJECTED HIS PARENTS' FALSE BELIEFS

[6:74] Remember that Abraham said to his father Azer, "How could you serve statues as gods? I see that you and your people have gone far astray."
[6:75] We showed Abraham the marvels of the heavens and the earth and empowered him with certainty.
[6:76] When the night fell he saw a shining star. "I think this is my God," he said. When it disappeared he said, "I do not like gods that disappear."
[6:77] When he saw the moon rising he said, "This could be my God." When it too disappeared he said, "Unless my Sustainer guides me I will be one of the drifters."
[6:78] When he saw the sun rising he said, "This must be my God. This is the greatest." But when it set, he said, "O my people, I denounce all your idolatry.
[6:79] "I have devoted myself absolutely to the One who initiated the heavens and the earth; I will never accept any authority to rank with God."
[6:80] His people challenged him. He said, "Do you challenge me about God, after He has guided me? I have no fear of the idols you have set up. Nothing can happen to me unless my Sustainer wills it. God's knowledge encompasses all things. Would you not now take heed?[273]
[6:81] "Why should I fear your idols? It is you who should be afraid since you serve instead of God, idols that are utterly powerless to help you. Which side is more deserving of security? Answer me, if you know."

THE DISTINGUISHED PEOPLE

[6:82] Those who believe in God's guidance and do not pollute their belief by displacing peace with turmoil, have deserved perfect security and they are truly guided.
[6:83] Such was Our conclusion with which We supported Abraham against the challenges of his people. We exalt whomever We will to higher ranks. Your Sustainer is Most Wise and aware of all things.

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[272] **God's will:** a process of creation and direction underpinned by precise laws that govern all things that come into existence.
[273] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). See verses: 2:76 & 6:83. **Abraham** on his journey of discovery he worshiped the star, the sun and the moon before realising that *service* is to God alone. See verse and footnote 40:66. **Following** your parents blindly is one of the greatest human tragedies. Abraham was a thinker and found the truth. See verse 37:74.

[6:84] And We granted him Isaac and Jacob and We guided both of them. Similarly, We guided Noah before that and from his descendants We guided David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses and Aaron. We thus reward those who do good.
[6:85] Also, Zachariah, John, Jesus and Elias; all were righteous people.
[6:86] And Ismail, Elisha, Jonah and Lot; each of these We distinguished over all other people.
[6:87] From among their ancestors, their descendants and their siblings, We chose many and We guided them in a straight and balanced path.
[6:88] Such is God's guidance with which He guides whomever He chooses from among His servants. Had any of them set up an authority to rank with God, their works would have been nullified.
[6:89] Those were the ones to whom We gave the scripture, the wisdom and duty to convey Our message of guidance. If these people reject it, We will substitute others in their place and the new people will not be disbelievers.
[6:90] These are the ones guided by God; you shall be guided in their footsteps. Say: "I do not ask you for any reward. This is a message for all the people."

GOD'S REVEALS HIS MESSAGE TO MANKIND

[6:91] They never fulfilled their duty to God, to honour Him as He should be honoured. Thus they said, "God does not reveal anything to any human being." Ask, "Who then revealed the book that Moses brought as a beacon and guidance for all the people?" You put it down on paper to proclaim it while concealing most of it. You were taught what you never knew, you and your parents. Say: "God is the One who revealed it," then leave them in their heedlessness and in their deluded pleasure.
[6:92] This too is an insightful guidance that We have revealed to you, confirming the previous scriptures, that you may warn the host community and all those around it. Those who believe in the better future will believe in this and will observe their commitments.
[6:93] Who is more evil than one who fabricates lies and attributes them to God or says, "I have received divine inspiration," when no such inspiration was given to him or says, "I can divulge the same as God's revelations?" If only you could see the transgressors at the time of death. The malaika extend their hands to them saying, "Let go of your Self. Today, you have incurred a shameful penalty for saying about God other than the truth and for being too arrogant to accept His guidance."
[6:94] You come back to Us as individuals, just as We created you the first time and you have left behind what We provided for you. We do not see with you the intercessors that you idolized or authorities that you set up as equals to Me and those who claimed that they will help you. All ties among you have been severed; the idols you set up have abandoned you.

[6:95] God is the One who causes the grains and the seeds to crack and germinate. He produces the living from the dead and the dead from the living. Such is God's power, so how could you deviate?
[6:96] At the break of dawn He causes the morning to emerge. He made the night still and He rendered the sun and the moon to serve as timing devices. Such is the design of the Almighty and He is aware of all things.
[6:97] And He is the One who made the stars to guide you during the darkness on the land and on the sea. We thus clarify the revelations for people who understand.
[6:98] He initiated you from one entity and mapped out your paths as well as your final destination. We thus clarify the revelations for people who understand.[274]

[6:99] He is the One who sends down water from the sky that produces all kinds of plants. We produce from the green stems multitudes of different grains, palm trees with hanging clusters and vines of grapes, olives and pomegranate; fruits that are varieties of similar and dissimilar kinds. Note their fruits as they grow and ripen. These are signs for people who believe.
[6:100] Yet, they set up besides God authorities to rank with Him from among those who are unseen, though He is the One who created them all. They even attribute to Him sons and daughters, without any knowledge. Be He glorified. He is the Most High, far above anything they attribute to Him.
[6:101] God is the initiator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a son when He never had a consort? He created all things and He is fully aware of all things.[275]
[6:102] Such is God your Sustainer, there is no authority to rank with Him, the creator of all things. You shall serve Him alone. He has power over all things.
[6:103] None can encompass Him, but He has penetrating understanding of everything. He is the compassionate and is aware of all things.

[6:104] Proofs have come to you from your Sustainer. As for those who can see them, they do so for their own good and those who turn a blind eye, do so to their own detriment. The messengers are not guardians over you.
[6:105] We thus explain the revelations to show that you have received knowledge and to clarify them for people who know.[276]

[274] **Life evolved** from one entity and through evolution became many creations. See verse and footnote 36:82. **Destiny:** Is everything predetermined? See verses and footnotes 6:59; 97:1.
[275] **God creates,** He does not procreate. Attributing offspring to Him brings Him down to the same level as biological beings, the very things He created. God is incomparable and is above all His creations. See verses and footnotes 19:16-21. See also 112:1-4.
[276] **People** see what they want: looking at a forest an artist may see the natural beauty and the lumberjack sees timber.

FOLLOW THE QURAN: GOD'S REVELATION

[6:106] Follow what is revealed to you from your Sustainer; there is no authority to equal with Him and disregard those who set up authorities to rank with God.
[6:107] Had God willed they would not have served the authorities they set up to equal God. We did not appoint you as their guardian nor are you their advocate.
[6:108] Be tolerant and do not berate those who set up authorities to rank with God, lest they maliciously curse God out of ignorance. The works of every deviant group seems good in their eyes. Ultimately they return to their Sustainer then He will inform them of everything they did.[277]
[6:109] They swore by God, solemnly, that if a sign came to them they would surely believe. Say: "All signs come only from God." Do you know if a sign did come to them they would not continue to disbelieve?
[6:110] They are befuddled in their minds and in their hearts. Thus, since their decision is to disbelieve, We leave them in their transgression, blundering.
[6:111] Even if We sent down the malaika to them, even if the dead spoke to them, even if they saw many signs before them, they cannot believe unless God's ordinance allows it. Indeed, most of them are oblivious.

TRADITIONS ATTRIBUTED TO THE MESSENGERS

[6:112] We have allowed the enemies, apparent and non-apparent, of every messenger, to inspire in each other fancy stories in order to conspire and deceive. Had your God willed, they would not have done it. You shall disregard them and their fabrications.[278]
[6:113] This is so to give freedom and allow the minds of those who do not believe in the coming life to incline to such fabrications and accept them and thus expose their real convictions.[279]

QURAN: FULLY DETAILED GUIDANCE

[6:114] Shall I seek other than God as an authority of law, when He has revealed this book fully detailed? Those who received the previous scriptures recognize that this has been revealed from your God, truthfully. You shall not harbour any doubt.[280]

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[277] **Tolerance** and understanding is advocated at all times by God. A good example is the best weapon against evil and corrupt people. By applying this guidance individuals can excel in being good examples. See verse 16:125.
[278] **Any traditions,** rituals and customs followed religiously in contradiction with the Quran are such fabrications mentioned here. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 12:106.
[279] **Why does God** give latitude to the wicked? See verses and footnotes 3:178; 23:56.
[280] **The Quran** contains God's decrees complete with all the necessary details. To accept any other book as an equal authority is a gross offence, shirk: high treason, treachery of the most heinous kind. See verses and footnote 4:82; 6:19; 6:38; 18:27; 42:21; 68:37-39. See also verse 49:7.

[6:115] The word of your Sustainer is complete in truth and justice. Nothing abrogates His words. He is the Hearer and aware of all things.
[6:116] If you follow the majority of people on earth, they will divert you from the path of God. They follow only conjecture and they only guess.[281]
[6:117] Your Sustainer is fully aware of those who stray off His path and He is fully aware of those who are guided.

REMEMBER GOD BEFORE YOU EAT

[6:118] You shall eat from that upon which God's name has been pronounced, if you truly believe in His guidance.[282]
[6:119] Why should you not eat from that upon which God's name has been mentioned? He has detailed what is restricted for you, unless you have no choice. Indeed many people, without true knowledge, mislead others with their personal opinions. The One who sustains you is fully aware of the transgressors.
[6:120] You shall avoid all wrongdoing in open or secret. Those who do wrong will surely pay for their transgressions.
[6:121] Do not eat from that upon which the name of God has not been mentioned, for it is an abomination. The evil ones inspire their allies to argue with you. If you obey them, you will be among those who support an authority to equal God.[283]
[6:122] Is one who was like the dead and We granted him a renewed life and provided him with light that enables him to move among his people equal to one in total darkness from which he can never exit? The works of the disbelievers thus seem good in their own eyes.
[6:123] We allow the leading criminals of every community to plot and scheme. But they only plot and scheme against their own Self, without perceiving.[284]

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[281] **The majority of people** only follow conjecture. They have no independent thinking and blindly follow what they have inherited from their parents and society. This is not team spirit but herd mentality, that is mental bondage. People often find they cannot set themselves free from the prevalent culture. In such a situation a person becomes incapable of critical thinking. He becomes incapable of stepping out of the mould imposed on him since childhood. In order to break out the person need not be rebellious but should seek the truth. See verses and footnotes 43:22-25; 6:116; 17:23-26; 26:69-104; 60:4-7; 77:50 & 16:30; 22:15. Also see 7:179.

[282] **Recite** "In the name of God." before eating any meal. There is no decree that animals need to be ritually slaughtered before their meat becomes lawful as food. Only in the case of sacrificial slaughter should God's name be invoked *before* killing the animal. See verse 22:36.

[283] **Following** dietary prohibitions from a source other than the Quran is tantamount to setting up an authority to rival God. This is shirk: high treason and a heinous treachery. You may not be able to verify how an animal is slaughtered therefore it is important to mention God's name before eating, as a remembrance to the one who sustains you. See verse and footnote 2:168.

[284] **Littering,** gambling, drug abuse, prostitution or drunkenness are often called 'victimless crimes' but in reality there is no such thing as a victimless crime. Every conscious choice that a person makes affects the Self, and if the action is regressive then it is a crime against the Self, the extent and gravity of the impact depending on the seriousness of the offence. Also less serious acts such

[6:124] When potent signs come to them they say, "We will not believe, unless we are given what was given to God's messengers" God knows exactly who is best qualified to deliver His message. Such culprits will suffer humiliation at God and a terrible retribution as a consequence of their evil scheming.

BREATHING RESTRICTED AT ALTITUDES

[6:125] Whoever is guided by God's ordinance, He renders his heart wide open to submission. And whoever moves astray according to His ordinance, He renders his heart intolerant and constricted, like the chest of the one who climbs towards the sky.[285] God's ordinance thus places a difficult situation upon those who refuse to believe.
[6:126] This guidance is the straight and balanced path to the One who sustains you. We have explained the revelations for people who take heed.
[6:127] They have deserved the abode of peace at their Sustainer; He is their Sustainer and Protector and it is a reward for their good works.
[6:128] The day will come when He summons all of them and says: "O you unseen ones,[286] you have claimed multitudes of people." Their companions will say, "Our God, we enjoyed each others' company until we wasted the life span set for us." He will say, "Hell is your end." They abide therein forever, in accordance with God's ordinance. Your Sustainer is the arbiter and aware of all things.
[6:129] We thus match the wicked to be companions of each other as a punishment for their transgressions.
[6:130] O you unseen ones and those who are prominent, did you not receive messengers from among you who narrated to you My revelations and warned you about the meeting of this day? They will say, "We bear witness against ourselves." They were totally preoccupied with the worldly life and they will bear witness against themselves that they rejected this guidance.
[6:131] This is to show that God never annihilates any community unjustly, while its people are unaware of guidance.
[6:132] Everyone will attain a rank commensurate with their deeds. Your Sustainer is never unaware of anything you do.[287]

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as littering or vagrancy may not appear to have a far reaching effect yet still perpetuate uncaring and unresponsive individuals or society. See verses and footnote 9:1-10.

[285] **Oxygen** diminishes at high altitude, a fact unlikely to be known during the Quran's revelation.

[286] **Unseen,** concealed, undistinguished, unapparent or inconspicuous. (Arabic: *Jinn*)**.** Before birth, all humans were 'jinns' i.e. hidden within their mothers' wombs. See 53:32.

[287] **Each individual** will be judged to his or her own capacity to do good. We can use the analogy of plants to explain this: a leafing plant will only leaf and cannot be expect to do anything else, a leafing and a flowering plant will have leaves and produce flowers, while another plant will not only have leaves and produce flowers but also will bear fruit. The capacity of each plant is different and we can only expect each plant to reach its *own* potential - no more. The human has the option of choice, but

[6:133] Your Sustainer is the One who is Self-sufficient, possessor of all compassion. He can, according to His ordinance, remove you and substitute others in your place, just as He produced you from the progeny of other people.
[6:134] What is promised to you will come to pass and you can never evade it.
[6:135] Say: "O my people, do your best and so will I. You will surely find out who the ultimate victors are." Certainly, the wicked will never succeed.

THEIR MASTERS SET UP TO RIVAL GOD'S AUTHORITY

[6:136] They even set aside a share of God's provisions from their crops and livestock, saying, "This share belongs to God," according to their claims, "and this share belongs to our masters." Of course, what was pledged for their masters never reached God, while the share they committed to God invariably went to their masters whom they had set up as authorities alongside God. Miserable indeed is their judgment.
[6:137] They served the authorities they set up to equal God and were duped by these masters to the extent of killing their own children. In fact, their leaders inflict great pain upon them and confuse their deen for them. Had God willed they would not have done it. You shall disregard them and their fabrications.[288]

DIETARY INNOVATIONS CONDEMNED

[6:138] They said, "These are livestock and crops that are prohibited, no one shall eat them except whomever We permit." So they claimed. They also prohibited putting to work certain livestock. Even the other livestock they ate, they never pronounced God's name before eating. Such are the innovations attributed to Him. He will surely requite them for their innovations.
[6:139] They also said, "What is in the wombs of these livestock is reserved exclusively for the males among us and prohibited for our wives." But if it was a stillbirth, they permitted their wives to share therein. He will certainly requite them for their innovations. He is Most Wise and aware of all things.

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still can only act within the limits of his or her natural ability, capacity and the opportunities available. However, God does make it a duty to fulfil one's own potential, whatever that potential is. The intelligent being will seek to do so and each person will be judged according to the effort made to realise this. Individuals are judged by the measure of their endeavour. See verses and footnotes 6:164-165; 47:32; 67:2; 90:3-8; 23:14; 84:19 and also footnote to verse 10:109.

[288] **Most people** follow a deen, a system of sorts, not a system such as the Deen-Islam; as enshrined in the Quran. There is a vast difference between man's system and God's System, the Quranic social order: the Deen-Islam. See verse 3:85.

[6:140] Losers indeed are those who killed their children, unrestrained by guidance, and prohibited what God has provided for them and followed innovations wrongly attributed to God. They have gone far astray; they are not guided.
[6:141] He is the One who established gardens with trellises and without trellises and palm trees and crops with different tastes and olives and pomegranate, fruits that are varieties of similar yet dissimilar in kind. Eat from their fruits in season when ripened and give the workers their due wages on the day of harvest and do not waste anything. God does not care for the wasters.
[6:142] Some livestock supply you with transportation as well as bedding materials. Eat from God's provisions to you and do not follow the steps of the misguided; they are your most ardent enemies.
[6:143] Their superstition rested on eight kinds of livestock. Regarding the two kinds of sheep and the two kinds of goats, say: "Is it the two males that He prohibited or the two females or the contents of the wombs of the two females? Tell me what you know, if you are truthful."
[6:144] Regarding the two kinds of camels and the two kinds of cattle, say: "Is it the two males that He prohibited or the two females or the contents of the wombs of the two females? Were you witnesses when God decreed such prohibitions for you? Who is more evil than those who invent such lies and attribute them to God? They thus mislead many people without knowledge. God does not guide such evil people."

GOD'S DECREES: DIETARY DISCIPLINES

[6:145] Say: "I do not find in this guidance given to me any food that is restricted for anyone except carrion, animals that have died of themselves, excess blood, the meat of pigs and any food consecrated in a name other than God's." If one is compelled to eat these, without deliberate or willing transgression, then your Sustainer is Protector, Most Merciful.[289]
[6:146] For those who are Jewish We restricted animals with undivided hoofs; and of the cattle and sheep We restricted the fat, except that which is carried on their backs or in the viscera or mixed with bones. That was a retribution for their transgressions and We are truthful.
[6:147] If they disbelieve you, then say: "Your Sustainer possesses infinite mercy, but His retribution is unavoidable for the guilty people."

[289] **Dietary restrictions** are for health and safety reasons. However, any other food sanctified to a deity, saint, dead ancestor or any other revered person is forbidden on the grounds that it is 'shirk' to accept an authority to rank with God. Pigs are genetically close to humans. Cannibals say pork tastes similar to human flesh and people are in fact known as 'Long Pigs' in some Pacific islands. **Excess blood:** (Arabic: *safaha.* Root S'F'H. Derivative: *masfuhan*). Excess blood means all excessive blood except that which naturally remains in the meat. See verses and footnotes 2:168; 16:115. See also 7:67. Another use of the word *safaha:* excesses, without restraint etc.

[6:148] Those who accept authorities to rank with God say, "Had God willed, we would not have done this nor would our parents nor would we wrongly prohibit anything." Thus did those before them disbelieve, until they incurred Our retribution. Say: "Do you have any proven knowledge that you can show us? You follow nothing but conjecture; you only guess."
[6:149] Say: "God sets out for you absolute challenges to realise your Self, if He wills He can guide all of you."[290]
[6:150] Say: "Bring your witnesses who will testify that God has prohibited this or that." If they testify, do not testify with them. Nor shall you follow the opinions of those who reject Our guidance and those who disbelieve in the Hereafter and those who set up authorities to rank with their Sustainer.
[6:151] Say: "Come let me tell you what your Sustainer has really sanctioned for you: You shall not accept any authority to equal with Him. You shall honour your parents and treat them with kindness. You shall not kill your children from fear of poverty. We provide for you and for them. You shall not commit any shameful deeds, in open or secret. You shall not kill except in the course of justice for God has made life sacred. These are God's commandments to you that you may understand."
[6:152] You shall not touch the orphans' money except in the most righteous manner until they reach maturity. You shall give full weight and full measure when you trade and be equitable. We do not burden any Self beyond its means. You shall speak only the truth when you bear witness, even against those close to you. You shall fulfil your promise with God. These are God's commandments to you, that you may take heed.
[6:153] This is My path, the straight and balanced path. You shall follow it and do not follow any other paths, lest they divert you from My path. These are God's commandments to you that you may protect yourself from lasting harm.
[6:154] And We gave Moses the scripture, complete with the best commandments and detailing everything and a beacon and mercy that they may believe in meeting their Sustainer.
[6:155] This too is an unstinted guidance that We have revealed. You shall follow it and lead a righteous life that you may attain mercy.
[6:156] Now you can no longer say, "The guidance was sent down to two groups before us but We were unaware of their teachings."
[6:157] Nor can you say, "If only a scripture could come down to us, we would be better guided than they." A clearly explained guidance as a beacon and a mercy has now come to you from your Sustainer. Now, who is more evil than one who rejects these signs from God and disregards them?

[290] **Challenge,** trial, test. (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). See verse: 2:76. **Absolute,** complete, highly developed, fully matured. (Arabic: *baligh*. Root B'L'GH. Derivatives: *balagh, baligha, yablughu*. See verse and footnote: 46:35.

We will commit those who disregard Our guidance to the worst retribution for their heedlessness.
[6:158] Are they waiting for the malaika to come to them or even God or some physical manifestations of the One who Sustains you? The day this happens no Self will benefit from believing if it did not believe before that and did not reap the benefits of belief by leading a righteous life. Say: "Keep on waiting. We too are waiting."[291]

ONE DEEN-ISLAM: DIVISIONS CONDEMNED

[6:159] Those who create differences in this Deen and separate themselves from Deen-Islam and form conflicting sects do not belong with you. Their judgment rests with God, and then He will inform them of everything they had done.[292]
[6:160] Whoever does a righteous deed receives the reward of ten and the one who commits a wrongful act is punished for only what he committed. No one suffers the slightest injustice.
[6:161] Say: "My Sustainer has guided me in a straight and balanced path, the perfect creed of Abraham, the one with complete conviction. He never accepted any authority to rival or equal God."
[6:162] Say: "My commitments, my service, my life and my death are all devoted absolutely to God, the Sustainer of the universe.
[6:163] "He has no equal. This is what I am commanded to believe and I am the first to submit."
[6:164] Say: "Shall I seek other than God as my Sustainer when He is the sustainer of all things? No Self benefits except from its own works and none bears the burden of another. Ultimately, you return to your God then He informs you of the truth regarding all your disputes."
[6:165] He is the One who made you successors on the earth and He raised some of you above others in rank, in order to test you in accordance with what He has given you. Surely, your Sustainer is efficient in enforcing retribution and He is Protector, Most Merciful.[293]

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[291] **The Self** develops by facing challenges and overcoming obstacles. Following the Quranic guidance disciplines and strengthens your personality, making it ready for the coming life. If you do not adhere to these values you will be unprepared and too weak to progress further. See verses and footnotes 3:142; 6:149; 16:192; 23:14; 90:10-20; 84:19; 94:3-8.
[292] **There is** only one God's System; the established Social Order of Deen-Islam. To make separate divisive and conflicting systems, religions, sects etc. is shirk, high treason and tantamount to setting up an authority to rank with God. Therefore, any religion even if it claims belief in the One God and also professes belief in the Quran, is exposed as committing shirk if it has any doctrine that conflicts with the Quran - even though it's people may sincerely believe that they are *muslims*: submitters to God. See verses and footnote 3:23-24; 6:22; 6:44; 9:1-10; 12:106.
[293] **Each individual** will be judged to his or her own capacity to do good. We can use the analogy of plants to explain this. See verse and footnote 6:132.

Sura 7: The Heights (Al-A'araf)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[7:1] A. L. M. S.
[7:2] This guidance has been revealed to you, let there be no reservation in your heart that you may warn with it, and it provides a reminder for the believers.
[7:3] You shall all follow what is revealed in it from your Sustainer and do not accept any authority as equal to Him. Yet, rarely do people take heed.
[7:4] Many a community We annihilated; they incurred Our retribution while they were asleep or wide awake.
[7:5] Their utterance when Our retribution came to them was: "Indeed, we have been transgressors."
[7:6] We will certainly question those who received the message and We will question the messengers.
[7:7] We will inform them that We were never absent. We know for sure, while they may be unaware.

[7:8] The scales will be set on that day, equitably. Those whose weights are heavy will be the ones who have prospered.
[7:9] As for those who are undeveloped, they will be the ones who weakened their Self as a consequence of disregarding Our revealed guidance.[294]
[7:10] We established you on earth and We have provided for you the means of support therein. Rarely are you appreciative.

THE ASSESSMENT BEGINS

[7:11] We created you, then We evolved and shaped you and We said to the malaika, "Yield yourself before Adam." They all surrendered, except Iblees; he was not with those who yielded themselves to Adam.[295]

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[294] **Instantaneous** evaluation will show those who have a developed Self and can progress while the weak Self will struggle and face frustration, neither able to move forward nor able to return. Truly a state of hell for those who do not follow this guidance.

[295] **The malaika** are the energies that facilitate all things in the universe, including the activities within human beings. **Adam** is a generic name for all mankind and not an individual person or indeed the first human being. Commanding submission of the malaika to Adam is in fact putting all the forces of nature and natural resources under man's domain. See verse and footnote 36:82. **Iblees** is the personification of the malaika, the human psyche and an aspect of the Self, projecting the negative nature of the human conscience. Shaitan (satan) is a descriptive name of the same malaika that influences the human ego to perform regressive acts. Adam's shaitan is his egotistical Self. Read 7:11-30. See verses and footnote 2:30-39. **The malaika** are forces of energy that man can harness, the malaika submit to Adam by God's command, except Iblees. Everything in the heavens and the earth is in the service of mankind. See verse and footnote 31:20.

[7:12] God said to Iblees, "What prevented you from conceding to Adam when I commanded you?" He said, "I am better than he. You created in me fiery desires and he emerged from clay." [296]
[7:13] God said, "Then, you must go down for you are self-centred. Get out, you are debased."
[7:14] He said, "Grant me respite until the Day of Resurrection."
[7:15] He said, "You are granted respite."

[7:16] He said, "Since Your ordinance is that I go astray, I will try to mislead them from Your straight path.
[7:17] "I will come to them from before them and from behind them, and from their right and from their left, and You will find that most of them are unappreciative."[297]
[7:18] He said, "Get out from here, despised and defeated. Those among them who succumb to your influences will be filled with an inward fiery turmoil that consumes you all.

[7:19] "As for you Adam, dwell with your wife in tranquillity and eat from this garden as you please, but do not divide yourselves as the branches of this tree, lest you transgress and cause harm to your Self."

[7:20] Shaitan, the egotistic Self influenced them, sowing the seeds of conflict and then they became aware and shameful of their discord, before this they were innocent. He said, "Your Sustainer did not forbid you from this, except to prevent you from becoming like the malaika and from attaining eternal life."
[7:21] He swore to them, "I am advising you most sincerely."
[7:22] He thus persuaded them with deception and lies. As soon as they tasted the fruits of their dissention, they both became aware of their shame and they tried to cover-up their involvement. God, the One who sustains, called upon them: "Did I not forbid you from this and warn you that the shaitan, your egotistical Self, is your own most fervent enemy?"
[7:23] They said, "Our Sustainer, we have wronged our Self and unless You protect us and have mercy on us we will be losers."
[7:24] He said, "Go down in divergence with one another. On earth shall be your habitation and provision for a while."
[7:25] He said, "On it you will live, on it you will die and from it you will be brought out."

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[296] **It is not possible** that God's command is disobeyed, but this is 'free will', the Ego, exercising its God given prerogative and privilege.
[297] **Iblees (shaitan)** the egotistic aspect of the Self. A strong willed person is steadfast and does not succumb and come under the influence of his negative desires. See verses 6:77; 7:17; 14:22; 15:42; 16:98-100; 17:61-65. **Drifter:** see footnote to verse 15:42.

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE BEST POLICY

[7:26] O children of Adam, We have provided you with garments to protect and cover your bodies, as well as for luxury. But the best armour is the strengthening and safeguarding of your own righteousness. These are some of God's signs so that you may take heed.

[7:27] O children of Adam, do not let shaitan, your egotistical Self, delude you as he did when he caused the destruction of your parents from the state of harmony and the removal of their robes of innocence. Shaitan and his kind are aware of you, while you do not see them. The shaitan, your own egotistical Self, is the influential companion of those who do not believe in this guidance or accountability to God.[298]

BLINDLY FOLLOWING PARENTS - A TRAGEDY

[7:28] They commit a gross offence then say, "We found our parents doing this and God has commanded us to do it." Say: "God never advocates wrongdoing. Are you saying about God what you do not know?"
[7:29] Say: "My Sustainer advocates justice and to be devoted to Him alone wherever we serve Him. You shall devote your service absolutely to Him alone. Just as He initiated you, you will ultimately return to Him."

MANY ARE ASTRAY WHILE BELIEVING THAT THEY ARE GUIDED

[7:30] Some He guided by His ordinance, while others are dedicated to straying according to His ordinance. They have taken the shaitans, their own egotistical Self as their authority, instead of God, yet they believe that they are guided.

DRESS WELL - DON'T OVERINDULGE

[7:31] O children of Adam, you shall be clean and dress agreeably when you go about your daily submissions. And eat and drink moderately. Surely, God does not care for those who are gluttons.[299]

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[298] **Shaitan,** Iblees: The negative force in every human being, the regressive aspect of our personality. Every individual has a dark hidden aspect, the negative trait of their psyche, drawing the Self to acts that inevitably lead to disappointment and frustration. This is illustrated by Adam's tussle with his own Ego. **Adam's shaitan:** his egotistical Self. To consider your own opinion as the ultimate deciding factor is to idolise your own ego as an authority to rival God. This is shirk and an offence of great arrogance. See verses and footnotes 2:30-39 and 38:26.

[299] **Submissions:** As you go about day-to-day tasks you should also pay attention to personal hygiene and dress sense. Verse 7:26 clearly points out that the best protection is righteousness, however, God does not forbid the good things in life and we should dress the best we can. Shakespeare too recognised the importance of being well attired and in Hamlet has Polonius say: "For the apparel oft proclaims the man." or "clothes maketh a man." See verses 4:43; 5:6.

DON'T FORBID WHAT GOD HAS NOT

[7:32] Say: "Who prohibited the beautiful things God has created for His creatures and the good provisions?"[300] Say: "Such provisions are to be enjoyed in this life by those who believe. Moreover, the fine provisions will be exclusively theirs on the Day of Resurrection." We thus explain the revelations for people who know.

INDECENCIES PROHIBITED

[7:33] Say: "My Sustainer forbids indecencies whether committed in public or secret, and all insurrection and hostility against truth, and to accept beside God powerless authorities to rival Him, and to say about God what you do not know."[301]

[7:34] For each community, there is a predetermined lifespan. Once their term comes to an end, they cannot delay it by one hour, nor advance it.
[7:35] O children of Adam, when messengers come to you from among you and guide you with My revelations, those who take heed and lead a righteous life will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.

[7:36] As for those who reject Our guidance and are too arrogant to uphold it, they have incurred a state of turmoil where they abide forever.
[7:37] Who is more evil than those who invent lies about God or reject His guidance? These will get their share in accordance with the scripture, then when Our messengers[302] come to terminate their lives they will say, "Where are the idols and authorities you used to implore besides God?" They will say, "They have abandoned us." They will bear witness against themselves that they disbelieved in this guidance.

WRONGDOERS SQUABBLE AND BLAME EACH OTHER

[7:38] He will say, "Enter with the previous communities of non-prominent and prominent individuals into a state of turmoil and hell." Every time a generation enters, they will curse each other. Once they are all in it, the last one will say of those who preceded them, "Our Sustainer, these are the ones who misled us. Give them double the retribution of this misery." He will say, "Each receives their due portion, but you do not know."

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[300] **Everything** God has created (clothes, music, art, perfume, jewellery etc.) is for enjoyment, as long as a wholesome discipline is maintained. Do not forbid what God has not.
[301] **Forbid,** restrict. (Arabic: *haram.* Root H'R'M). See verses and footnote 5:33; 2:173; 6:115. **Indecencies:** behaviour that is morally or sexually offensive whether open or in private is forbidden. See verse and footnote 24:4.
[302] **Messengers**: malaika are also messengers, some assigned to terminate life. See verse 47:27.

[7:39] The first group will say to the previous ones, "Since you had an advantage over us, taste the retribution for your own wrongdoing."[303]

REJECTING GOD'S GUIDANCE: A GROSS OFFENCE

[7:40] Surely, those who reject Our guidance and are too arrogant to uphold it, the gates of eternal mercy will never open for them, nor will they enter lasting tranquillity until a camel passes through the eye of a needle. We thus punish the guilty.[304]

[7:41] They have incurred the life of turmoil, a hell as an abode of their own making; with barriers around them. We thus punish the transgressors.

[7:42] As for those who believe in this guidance and lead a righteous life, We never burden any Self beyond its means, these will be the dwellers of a state of harmony and tranquillity. There they live forever.

[7:43] We will remove all regressive desires from their hearts. They will be in an environment of harmony and they will say, "God be praised for guiding us. We could not possibly be guided, if it were not that God had guided us. The messengers of our Sustainer did bring the truth." It will be said: "This is the paradise that you created with your works."

[7:44] Those who are in harmony will call the dwellers of hell: "We have found our Sustainer's promise to be the truth, have you found your Sustainer's promise to be the truth?" They will say, "Yes." An announcer between them will proclaim: "God's condemnation has befallen the transgressors

[7:45] who repel people from the path of God and strive to make it crooked and with regard to their future life, they are disbelievers."

[7:46] A barrier separates them and people who enter and recognise each side by their looks. They will call the ones living in harmony: "Peace be upon you." These did not enter this place of tranquillity through wishful thinking.

[7:47] When they turn their eyes towards those in the turmoil of hell, they will say, "Our God, do not put us with these wicked people."

FOLLOW THE TRUTH - NOT THE MAJORITY

[7:48] Those who descend from the heights will call on people they recognise in this state of hell, saying, "Your great numbers did not help you in any way, nor did your arrogance.

[7:49] "Are those the people you swore that God will never touch them with mercy?" The newcomers will be welcomed: "Enter paradise; you have nothing to fear nor will you grieve."

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[303] **Leaders and followers** face each other in the turmoil of hell. See verses and footnotes 64:9 & 64:18.

[304] **The eye of a needle:** this phrase is an analogy, as no real camel can literally pass through the eye of a real sewing needle and therefore, those who turn away from this guidance and fail to protect and develop themselves have no chance to make themselves fit for the life yet to come.

[7:50] The dwellers in misery will plead to those who abide in peace and have what they desire: "Let some of your water or some of God's provisions to you flow towards us." They will say: "God has forbidden them for the disbelievers."
[7:51] Those who do not take this Deen-Islam seriously and are totally beguiled with this transient life, We will repulse them on that day, because they refused to accept the day of reckoning and because they ignored Our guidance.

THE QURAN: FULLY DETAILED GUIDANCE

[7:52] We have given this guidance, fully detailed, with knowledge, direction and mercy for all the people who believe.
[7:53] Are they waiting until everything is completed? The day all things have been concluded, those who disregarded Our guidance in the past will say, "The messengers of our Sustainer did bring the truth. Are there any intercessors to intercede on our behalf? Would you send us back so that we change the way we lived and do better works than what we did?" They have lost their Self and the lifestyles they invented caused their downfall.
[7:54] Your Sustainer is the one God who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, then assumed all authority. The night overtakes the day and it pursues it persistently, and the sun, the moon and the stars are committed to serve by His ordinance. Absolutely, He creates and directs all things by His ordinance. Most Exalted is God, Sustainer of the universe.
[7:55] You shall serve your Sustainer publicly and in private; He does not care for the transgressors.
[7:56] Do not corrupt anything on earth after you have been given clear guidance and serve Him by following His guidance and anticipate good outcomes. Surely, God's compassion is attainable only by those who do good.
[7:57] He is the One who sends the wind as a good sign; a mercy from Him. Once the heavy clouds gather, We drive them to dead lands and send down water from them to produce all kinds of fruits. Likewise, We resurrect the dead, that you may take heed.
[7:58] The good land readily produces its crops and fruit by the ordinance of its Sustainer, while the bad land rarely produces anything useful. We thus explain this guidance for people who are appreciative.

MESSENGERS BRING REMINDERS

[7:59] We sent Noah to his people, saying, "O my people, serve God by following His guidance; you have no other authority that can rank with Him. I fear for you the retribution of an awful day."
[7:60] The leaders among his people said, "We see that you are far astray."

[7:61] He said, "O my people, I am not astray; I am a messenger from the Sustainer of the universe.
[7:62] "I deliver to you the complete message of my Sustainer and I advise you that I know from God what you do not know.
[7:63] "Is it too much of a wonder that a reminder should come to you from your Sustainer, through a man like you, to warn you and to lead you to righteousness that you may attain mercy?"
[7:64] They rejected him. Consequently, We saved him and those with him in the watercraft and We drowned those who rejected Our guidance; they did not see its benefits.

QUESTION WHAT YOUR PARENTS WORSHIP

[7:65] To Aad We sent their brother Hud. He said, "O my people, serve God; there is no other authority to rank with Him. Would you then observe righteousness?"
[7:66] The leaders who disbelieved among his people said, "We see that you are behaving intemperately and we think that you are a liar."
[7:67] He said, "O my people, there are no excesses in me; I am a messenger from the Sustainer of the universe.[305]
[7:68] "I deliver to you my Sustainer's complete message and I am honestly advising you.
[7:69] "Is it too much of a wonder that a message should come to you from the One who Sustains you, through a man like you, to warn you? Recall that He made you inheritors after the people of Noah and multiplied your number. Remember God's favours, that you may succeed."
[7:70] They said, "Did you come to make us serve God alone and abandon what our parents taught us to worship? We challenge you to bring the doom you threaten us with, if you are truthful."[306]
[7:71] He said, "You have incurred condemnation and wrath from your Sustainer. Do you argue with me to defend the religious traditions you have invented, you and your parents, which were never authorised by God? Therefore, wait and I will wait along with you."
[7:72] We then saved him and those with him, by mercy from us and We annihilated those who rejected Our guidance and refused to believe.

THE TEST OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

[7:73] To Thamud We sent their brother Saleh. He said, "O my people, serve God; there is no other authority to equal Him. A sign to test your discipline

[305] **Intemperate, excesses:** lacking in self-control, going beyond excesses, lacking in self-restraint, unreasonable. (Arabic: *safaha.* Root S'F'H). See verses 2:130.
[306] **The Arabic** word for 'alone' (*wahdahu*) occurs only six times in the Quran, one of them refers to upholding the Quran *alone* [17:46]. The reference to God *alone* occurs in 7:70, 39:45, 40:12 & 84 and 60:4. **Muslim:** Submitter. Serves God alone and follows the guidance in the Quran alone.

has been provided for you by your Sustainer: here is a camel designated by God, to serve as a symbol for you. Let her enjoy God's provisions on earth and do not touch her with any harm, lest you incur a painful retribution.
[7:74] "Recall that He made you inheritors after Aad and established you on earth, building mansions in its valleys and carving homes from its mountains. You shall remember God's favours and do not wander the earth in a corrupting manner."
[7:75] The arrogant leaders among his people said to the common people who believed, "How do you know that Saleh is sent by his Sustainer?" They said, "The profound guidance he brought has made us believers."[307]
[7:76] The arrogant ones said, "We disbelieve in what you believe."
[7:77] Subsequently, they slaughtered the camel, rebelled against their Sustainer's command and said, "O Saleh, bring the doom you threaten us with, if you really are a messenger of God."[308]
[7:78] Consequently an earthquake annihilated them, leaving them dead in their homes.
[7:79] He turned away from them, saying, "O my people, I have delivered my Sustainer's complete message to you and advised you, but you do not like any advisers."

HOMOSEXUALITY: AN ILLICIT OFFENCE

[7:80] Lot said to his people, "You commit such an abomination; to the extent no one has done so before.[309]

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[307] **People should** become believers because they see the value of this profound guidance. The Absolute Laws and Permanent Values in the Quran replace fear with security and turmoil with peace. Truly a proper environment to promote the progress and welfare of society. **Arrogant:** having an exaggerated sense of one's own greatness and importance. arrogant, haughty, conceited, egotistic. (Arabic: *takabbar.* Root: K'B'R. Derivatives: *istakbbara, istakabbarta, istakabbartum*). See verses 38:73-74; 40:10; 40:47-50, 57; 45:31; 71:7. See also 6:19.

[308] **Camel:** This was a test and symbol of Self-discipline. See verse and footnote 91:14.

[309] **Homosexuality:** Any activity that is regressive to the human being is considered to be destructive to the development of the Self, therefore while homosexuality is not denounced, homosexual acts such as sodomy and buggery (both have similar meaning) are not only perverted acts, they also do not help realise the full potential of the male or female and are therefore forbidden in the strictest terms. Sodomy means anal-oral contact between same sex partners or sexual intercourse with an animal. It also means enforced anal or oral copulation with a member of the same or opposite sex. This is what the history of Lot's people is about, and those seeking to satisfy such lusts are condemned by God. This event describes people who are aggressive in their will to commit this atrocious crime - the intent is violent anal rape: Lot or his visitors did not invite them (neither would do such thing) - and therefore their actions warrant destruction. Children not only complete our biological functions but also add value to life. While some couples may not be able to have children due to no fault of their own, to deliberately pursue selfish lusts is unquestionably regressive to the future of mankind. Society benefits from marriage, and without the children it can bring, mankind is a stunted and stagnant being with no scope for development. If homosexual acts are a right of consenting adults then by extension, any sexual act by consenting adults, including incestuous sex, should also be a right. However, both are detrimental to the welfare and progress of society, and

[7:81] "You prefer sex with men, instead of women. Indeed, you are a deviant people."
[7:82] His people responded by saying, "Evict them from this town. They are people who think they are better than us."
[7:83] Consequently, We saved Lot and his family but not his wife; she was with those who were doomed.
[7:84] We showered them with a retribution; note the consequences for the guilty.

PRINCIPLES OF FAIR TRADING STANDARDS

[7:85] To Midyan We sent their brother Shu'aib. He said, "O my people, serve God; and do not take any authority to rank with Him. Proof has come to you from your Sustainer. You shall give full weight and full measure when you trade. Do not cheat any people out of their rights. Do not corrupt anything on earth after you have been given straight-forward guidance. This is better for you, if you are believers.
[7:86] "Refrain from placing hurdles in the path of those who do good; seeking to repel those who believe from the path of God and accountability to Him and do not make it crooked. Remember that you used to be few and He multiplied your number. Recall the consequences for the wicked.
[7:87] "Now that some of you have believed in what I was sent with and some have disbelieved, wait until God issues His judgment between us. He is the best judge."
[7:88] The arrogant leaders among his people said, "We will evict you from our town, O Shu'aib, together with those who believed in the guidance with you, unless you revert to our religion." Shu'aib said, "Are you going to force us?
[7:89] "We would be going against God if we reverted to your religion after God has saved us from it. How could we revert back to it against the ordinance of God, the one who sustains us? Our Sustainer's knowledge encompasses all things. We have put our trust in God. Our Sustainer, grant us a decisive victory over our people. You are the best supporter."
[7:90] The disbelieving leaders among his people said, "If you follow Shu'aib, you will be losers."
[7:91] The earthquake annihilated them, leaving them dead in their homes.
[7:92] Those who rejected Shu'aib vanished as if they never existed. Those who rejected Shu'aib were the losers.
[7:93] He turned away from them, saying, "O my people, I have delivered to you the complete message of the One who Sustains me and I have advised you. How can I grieve over disbelieving people?"

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therefore the Quran deems them to be criminal. **Incest:** Marriage, and by implication sex, is forbidden with close relatives. See verses 4:22-24; 11:77-82; 26:160-175; 27:55; 29:29.
Acts of immorality: see also verses and footnote 4:15-16.

GUIDANCE IS A MERCY FROM GOD

[7:94] Whenever We sent a messenger to any community; We afflicted its people with adversity and hardship that they may become humble and develop their Self.
[7:95] Then We substituted peace and prosperity in place of that hardship and pardoned them. But they turned reckless and said, "It was our parents who experienced that hardship before our prosperity." Consequently, We punished them suddenly when they least expected it.
[7:96] Had the people of those communities believed and turned righteous We would have showered them with favours from the heaven and the earth. Since they decided to disbelieve, We punished them for what they earned.
[7:97] Did the people of the present communities guarantee that Our retribution will not come to them in the night as they sleep?
[7:98] Did the people of today's communities guarantee that Our retribution will not come to them in the daytime while they play?
[7:99] Have they taken God's plans for granted? None take God's ordinance for granted except the losers.
[7:100] Does it ever occur to those who inherit the earth after previous generations that if We will, We can punish them for their wrongdoing and seal their hearts and cause them to turn deaf?
[7:101] We narrate to you the history of those communities: their messengers went to them with clear signs but they were not to believe in what they had rejected before. God's ordinance thus seals the hearts of the disbelievers.
[7:102] We found that most of them disregard their promises. We found most of them wicked.

MOSES TAKES A MESSAGE TO FIRAWN

[7:103] After those messengers We sent Moses with Our signs to Firawn and his people but they transgressed. Note the consequences for the wicked.
[7:104] Moses said, "O Firawn, I am a messenger from the Sustainer of the universe.
[7:105] "It is incumbent upon me that I do not say about God except the truth. I come to you with a sign from your Sustainer. Release the children of Israel."
[7:106] He said, "If you have a sign then produce it, if you are truthful."
[7:107] He threw down his staff and it turned into a tremendous serpent.
[7:108] He showed his hand and to the beholders it glowed brightly.
[7:109] The leaders among Firawn's people said, "This is no more than a clever magician.
[7:110] "He wants to turn you out of your land. What do you recommend?"

[7:111] They said, "Respite him and his brother and send summons to every city.
[7:112] "Let them call upon every experienced magician."
[7:113] The magicians came to Firawn and said, "Do we get paid if we are the winners?"
[7:114] He said, "Yes indeed, you will even become close to me."
[7:115] They said, "O Moses, either you begin or we will begin."
[7:116] He said, "You begin." When they threw something on the ground and what appeared to the people intimidated them, they had produced a wonderful magic.
[7:117] We then inspired Moses: "Throw down your staff," whereupon it swallowed whatever the magicians had fabricated.

THE TRUTH STANDS OUT FROM FALSEHOOD

[7:118] Thus, the truth prevailed and what they did was nullified.
[7:119] They were defeated then and there. They were humiliated.
[7:120] The magicians conceded to the greater work they saw.
[7:121] They exclaimed, "We believe in the One who sustains the universe.
[7:122] "The Sustainer of Moses and Aaron."
[7:123] Firawn said, "Did you believe in him without my permission? This must be a conspiracy you schemed in the city in order to take its people away. You will surely find out.
[7:124] "I will cut off your hands and feet on alternate sides then I will crucify you all."
[7:125] They said, "We will then return to our Sustainer.
[7:126] "You persecute us simply because we believed in the signs of our Sustainer when they came to us. Our God grant us steadfastness and let us die as submitters to you."
[7:127] The leaders among Firawn's people said, "Will you allow Moses and his people to corrupt the earth and forsake you and your gods?" He said, "We will kill their sons and defile their daughters. We are much more powerful than they are."
[7:128] Moses said to his people, "Seek God's help and steadfastly persevere. The earth belongs to God and He grants it to whomever He chooses from among His servants. The ultimate victory belongs to the righteous."
[7:129] They said, "We were persecuted before you came to us and after you came to us." He said, "Your Sustainer will annihilate your enemy and establish you on earth, then He will see how you behave."

AFTER WARNING, THE RETRIBUTION

[7:130] We then afflicted Firawn's people with drought and shortage of crops, that they may become humble and take heed.

[7:131] When good things came their way, they said, "We have deserved this," but when a hardship afflicted them, they blamed Moses and those with him. In fact, these signs are decided only by God but most of them do not know.
[7:132] They said, "No matter whatever kind of sign you show and bewitch us with your magic, we will not believe."[310]

[7:133] Consequently, they faced floods, invasions of locusts, epidemics of lice, influx of frogs and diseases of blood, all profound signs. But they maintained their arrogance. They were people of a most evil nature.
[7:134] Whenever a plague afflicted them, they said, "O Moses, implore your Sustainer to remove this, you are close to Him. If you relieve this calamity, we will believe with you and will send the children of Israel with you."
[7:135] Yet, when We relieved their affliction at the end of a term, they broke their pledge.

REMINDER TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

[7:136] Consequently, they paid for their actions and were drowned in the river. That is because they rejected Our signs and were totally heedless of Our guidance.
[7:137] We let the oppressed people inherit the land, east and west and We graced them with it. The endowed commands of your Sustainer were thus fulfilled for the children of Israel to reward them for their steadfastness and We annihilated the works of Firawn and his people and everything they harvested.
[7:138] We delivered the children of Israel across the water. When they passed by people who held strongly to idol worship, they said, "O Moses, make a god for us, like the gods they have." He said, "Indeed, you are ignorant people.
[7:139] "These people are committing a blasphemy, for what they are doing is disastrous for them.
[7:140] "Shall I seek for you other than God and to be accountable to Him alone, when He has granted you more than anyone else in the world?"
[7:141] Recall that We delivered you from Firawn's people, who inflicted the worst persecution upon you, killing your sons and defiling your daughters. That was an exacting trial for you from your Sustainer.

[310] **When** guidance of a better system with enduring values is shown, the ignorant think it is 'hard work' but other easier lifestyles of immediate pleasures are more alluring. You can take a horse to water, but you can't make it drink: you can give a person knowledge and guidance, but you can't make him think. Most people prefer comforting deception because the truth is challenging. It requires enterprise and change. The Quran says that the Self only develops by the measure of an individual's endeavour. No-one with a thinking mind can ignore this.

MOSES IN GOD'S PRESENCE

[7:142] We summoned Moses for thirty nights and completed them by adding ten. Thus, the audience with his Sustainer lasted forty nights. Moses said to his brother Aaron, "Stay here with my people, maintain righteousness and do not follow the ways of the corrupt."

[7:143] When Moses came at Our appointed place and his Sustainer spoke with him, he said, "My Sustainer, let me look at You and see You." He said, "You cannot see Me. Look at that mountain, if it stays in its place, then you can endure My presence." Then his Sustainer manifested Himself to the mountain and this caused it to crumble. Moses fell unconscious. When he regained his senses, he said, "Be You glorified. I repent to You and I am the most convinced believer."[311]

[7:144] He said, "O Moses, I have chosen you out of all the people with My messages and by speaking to you. Therefore take what I have given you and be appreciative."

[7:145] We inscribed for him on tablets the guidance and a detailed explanation: "You shall uphold these teachings strongly and exhort your people to uphold them. They are the most excellent teachings. I will point out for you the conclusion of those who are wicked."

EGOTISTICAL PEOPLE BECOME BLIND TO PROOF

[7:146] Those who are arrogant on earth will, in accordance with My ordinance, turn away from My guidance, and they will not be able to justify it. Consequently, when they see every kind of proof even then they will not believe. And when they see the path of guidance they will not accept it as their path, but when they see the path of straying they will be attracted to it. This is the consequence of their rejecting Our proofs and being totally heedless of them.

[7:147] Those who reject Our revelations and the meeting of the Hereafter, their works are nullified. Are they not punished for what they committed?

IDOL WORSHIP

[7:148] During his absence, Moses' people made from their metal ornaments a statue of a calf, complete with sound.[312] Did they not see that even then it could not speak to them or guide them in any way? They worshipped it and thus turned wicked.

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[311] **Moses** needed assurance that God was real, because as a human he had human failings, as did other messengers. See verse and footnote 40:66. **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.

[312] **Sound** can be produced when air enters and exits some type of resonator, the same as when a musical wind instrument is set to make a sound when air is blown into or over a mouthpiece. Any tubular pipe can be modified to make a sound. See verse 20:88.

[7:149] Finally, when they regretted their action and realised that they had gone astray, they said, "Unless our Sustainer redeems us with His mercy and protects us, we will be losers."
[7:150] When Moses returned to his people, angry and aggrieved, he said, "What a terrible thing you have done in my absence. Could you not wait for the judgement of your Sustainer?" He threw down the tablets and seized his brother Aaron's hair and dragged him towards himself. Aaron said, "My brother, these people took advantage of my weakness and almost killed me. Let not my enemies rejoice and do not count me with the transgressing people."
[7:151] Moses said, "My Sustainer, protect me and my brother and admit us into Your mercy. You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy."
[7:152] Surely, those who idolized the calf have incurred displeasure from their Sustainer and humiliation in this life. We thus punish those who fabricate idols for worship.
[7:153] As for those who commit wrong then repent thereafter and believe in this guidance, your Sustainer is the Protector, Most Merciful.[313]
[7:154] When Moses' anger subsided, he picked up the tablets, engraved with guidance and mercy for those who reverence their Sustainer.

MOSES AND SEVENTY MEN

[7:155] Moses then selected seventy men from among his people to come to Our appointed audience. When the earthquake shook them, he said, "My Sustainer, You could have annihilated them in the past together with me, if You so willed. Would You annihilate us for the deeds of the decadent among us? This must be the test that You have instituted for us according to your ordinance, You condemn some according to your ordinance and guide others according to your ordinance. You are our Sustainer and Protector, so protect us, shower us with Your mercy. You are the best protector.
[7:156] "And decree for us righteousness in this world and in the Hereafter. We have repented to You." God said, "My retribution befalls according to my ordinance. And My mercy embraces all things. However, I will specify it for those who do good work and keep their deeds pure and believe in Our guidance, and
[7:157] follow the gentile messenger-envoy, whom they find mentioned in their Taurah and the Injeel. He exhorts them to be righteous, cautions them from evil, allows for them all good food and prohibits that which is bad and unloads the burdens and the mental shackles imposed upon them. Those who believe in him, respect him, support him and follow this beacon that came with him are the successful ones."[314]

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[313] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.
[314] **Messenger-envoy:** (Arabic: *rasulan-nabiyal*). Rasul is a messenger who delivers a message and a nabi - described here as envoy, receives and delivers a revelation. Muhammad, as this verse shows, was both. There is a clear distinction between *rasul* and *nabi* (which appears 80 times

[7:158] Say: "O people, I am God's messenger to all of you. To Him belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. There is no authority to rank with Him. He controls life and death." Therefore, you shall believe in God and His messenger, the gentile messenger, who believes in God and His words. Follow him that you may be guided.

Recall that Moses sought water for his people. We said, "Set forth your aims at the rock with your staff from where twelve springs gush out." The members of each tribe knew their own source of water. Eat and drink from God's provisions and do not roam the earth disgracefully.

BELIEVERS AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

[7:159] Among the followers of Moses there are those who guide in accordance with the truth and the truth renders them righteous.
[7:160] We divided them into twelve tribal communities and We inspired Moses when his people questioned him: "Set forth your aims at the rock with your staff from where twelve springs gush out." The members of each tribe knew their own source of water. And We shaded them with clouds and sent down to them manna and quails: "Eat from the good things We provide for you." It is not Us that they wronged, it is they who wronged their own Self.
[7:161] Recall that they were told, "Go into this town to live and eat from there as you please, treat all the people amicably and enter the gate humbly in submission. We will then forgive your transgressions. We will multiply the reward for the righteous."
[7:162] But the evil ones among them substituted other commands for the decrees given to them. Consequently, We sent upon them condemnation from above, because of their wickedness.[315]

PROSPERITY & HARDSHIP: A TEST FOR BELIEVERS

[7:163] Remind them of the community by the sea who desecrated the Sabbath. When they observed the Sabbath, the fish were abundant. And

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throughout the Quran), and where this is critical, it is translated as envoy, otherwise retained as messenger as it does not detract from the exposition of the verse. See verses: 2:213; 3:79; 3:81; 6:89; 29:27; 45:16; 57:26. See also: 17:93; 19:51; 19:54; 22:52; 33:40; 57:25. **Gentile:** (Arabic: *ummy*). An individual or community unaware of true values. See verse 2:78. **Why** do bad things happen to good people? See verse and footnote 8:25.

[315] **The Quran** is complete, detailed and nothing relevant has been left out. It is the full and final account of God's law. But there are people who substitute in its place conflicting decrees from other hadith that they wrongly attributed to the messengers. This is shirk: high treason and a heinous transgression. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 9:1-10.

when they violated the Sabbath, the fish were in short supply. We thus afflicted them, as a consequence of their transgression.[316]
[7:164] Recall that a group of them said, "Why should you teach to guide people whom God will surely annihilate or punish severely?" They answered, "Ask for clemency from your Sustainer," We point them in the right direction that they might see the better way.

[7:165] When they disregarded what they were reminded of, We protected those who prohibited evil and the wrongdoers became afflicted with a terrible retribution of their own making.
[7:166] When they continued to defy the commandments, We said to them, "Be you despicable like apes, without understanding."
[7:167] Additionally, your Sustainer has decreed that He will raise up against them people who will inflict severe persecution upon them until the Day of Resurrection. Your Sustainer is most efficient in enforcing retribution and He is certainly the Protector, Most Merciful.

[7:168] We scattered them among many communities throughout the land. Some of them did good works and some were less than righteous. We tested them with prosperity and hardship that they may become humble and return to do good works.

[7:169] Subsequent to them, He substituted new generations who inherited the guidance. But they preferred this transient life instead, saying, "We will be forgiven." But then they continued to choose the fleeting pleasures of this world. Did they not make a promise to uphold the guidance and not to say about God except the truth? Did they not study this guidance? Certainly, the abode of the coming life is far better for those who maintain good works. Do you not understand?

BELIEF AND ACTION STRENGTHENS THE SELF

[7:170] Those who uphold the scripture and observe their commitments, We never fail to recompense the pious.
[7:171] As the mountain towered above them, they thought it was going to fall on them: "You shall strongly uphold this guidance We have given you and consider its contents, putting belief into action, that your Self be strengthened in character."

[316] **Sabath:** God's decrees may seem strange until you understand them. Everything becomes clear by explanation. Any restrictions or decrees are significant for a wholesome life and to discipline the Self. For example to preserve our eco-system for a better future we have to practice restraint and regulate our diet, eat chicken, meat or fish only one or two days a week. This is healthy and reduces intensive breeding and over fishing. Learn to grow and prepare your own food: it's healthier and better for the environment.

GOD INSTILS CONSCIOUSNESS IN MANKIND

[7:172] Recall that your Sustainer infused conscience in all the descendants of Adam and had them bear witness for themselves: "Am I not the One who sustains you?" They all said, "Yes. We bear witness." Thus, you cannot say on the Day of Reckoning, "We were not aware of this."
[7:173] Nor can you say, "It was our parents who set up authorities to rank with God and we simply followed in their footsteps. Will You punish us for following what others have innovated?"
[7:174] We thus explain the revelations to enable all the people to redeem themselves.[317]

THOSE WHO REJECT HIGH VALUES TOTALLY UNAWARE

[7:175] Recite for them the news of one who was given Our proofs but chose to disregard them. Consequently regressive thoughts influenced him until he strayed from the guidance.
[7:176] Had We willed, We could have elevated him in esteem according to Our ordinance, but he insisted on being obstinate and pursued his own opinions. Thus, he was like a dog. Whether you petted him or ignored him, he just panted. Such is the example of people who reject Our signs. Give these examples and guidance to all the people, that they may think over them.
[7:177] Bad indeed is the example of people who reject Our guidance. It is only their own Self that they harm.
[7:178] Whoever is guided by God's ordinance is the truly guided one and whoever becomes adrift according to His ordinance is the loser.
[7:179] We have committed to a state of hell multitudes of prominent and undistinguished people. They have minds with which they repel understanding, eyes with which they refuse to see and ears with which they decline to hear. They are like animals. No, they are far worse, they are totally unaware.[318]

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[317] **All human** beings have been imbued with a conscience - an instinctive knowledge about the basic rights and wrongs. They also have an intuitive latent awareness of accountability to a higher authority: God. Every person has in their subconscious prior knowledge of higher, greater authority with absolute power, and they activate this awareness of their own free will. When they recognise their accountability to their own Self and consequently to God, they then ignite the guiding light that allows them to follow the straight and balanced path. This verse is a reminder that a contract exists between God and each and every individual. See verses 5:7; 9:111; 13:20; 30:30; 76:4. See also verses 11:119; 57:8. **Each individual** is responsible for their own actions, to follow parents or others blindly will still leave you liable for what you do. Even in this life ignorance of the law is no defence: *Ignorantia juris non excusat or ignorantia legis neminem excusat* is a legal principle holding that a person who is unaware of a law may not escape liability for violating that law merely because he or she was unaware of its content.

[318] **In reality** man is not just an another animal because he has essential attributes other than those of animals. This is not only a relative difference of degree but an absolute difference in kind. To some extent animals may possess consciousness, deliberation and intellect. However, the animal is conscious but man is self-conscious. Self-awareness distinguishes man from other living beings.

GOD'S ORDINANCE GIVES LATITUDE

[7:180] To God belongs the most beautiful attributes. Call upon Him at all times and disregard those who distort His integrity. They will be punished for their wrongdoings.
[7:181] Among Our creations, there are those who guide with the truth and the truth renders them righteous.
[7:182] As for those who reject Our revelations, We give them enough latitude, they cause harm to themselves, without ever realising it.
[7:183] They even feel encouraged, My ordinance is formidable.
[7:184] Why do they not reflect upon their friend, the messenger? He is not fanatical. He simply gives profound warnings.
[7:185] Have they not looked at the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all the things God has created? Does it ever occur to them that the end of their life may be near? Which hadith, besides this message, do they believe in?[319]
[7:186] Whomever God's ordinance commits to straying, there is no way for anyone to guide him. He leaves them lost and unable to find the right path, blundering.

MESSENGERS DO NOT KNOW THE FUTURE

[7:187] They ask you about the end and the Final Hour[320] and when it will come to pass. Say: "The knowledge of this is with the One who sustains all things. Only He reveals its time. It is intrinsically structured in the heavens and the earth. It will not come to you except suddenly." They ask you as if you are in control of it. Say: "This knowledge is only with God," but most people do not know.

[7:188] Say: "I have no power to benefit myself or harm myself. My life spreads before me only according to God's ordinance. If I knew the future, I would have increased my wealth and no harm would have afflicted me. I am no more than a warner and a bearer of good news for those who believe in this guidance."[321]

Besides, human intelligence is far superior to animal intelligence in its range and capacity. What is suggested here is that animals never fail to behave directly in accordance with their natural instinct and in harmony with God's law. However, humans have egos and free wills. Therefore, by choice they may act badly. Humans are called on to use their God-given faculties for development and those who don't use their minds to think are described as worse than animals. **The majority of people follow conjecture.** See verses and footnotes 6:116; 77:50. **Drifter:** see verse 15:42.

[319] **Hadith:** narration, message. To follow another hadith in conflict with the Quran is shirk, the same as accepting another authority as equal with God. See verses and footnote 4:42; 9:1-10.

[320] **The universe** has a life span and we do not know when it will end, but for each and every one of us, death is the Final Hour.

[321] **Despite** what people may attribute to the messengers, here is one verse that that shows the messengers on the level of ordinary people. They are designated to deliver God's message, yes,

[7:189] He created you from one entity. Subsequently, He gives every man an opportunity to find a mate as company and to harmonise with her. When pregnant she carries a light weight that she can hardly notice. As it becomes more obvious, they implore God, their Sustainer: "If You give us a healthy baby, we will be appreciative."
[7:190] But when He gives them a child they desire, they attribute His gift to those who have set themselves up as authorities to rank with Him. God be exalted, far above any partnership they ascribe to Him.[322]
[7:191] Is it not a fact that they are assigning authority and power to those who create nothing and are themselves created,[323]
[7:192] false powers that can neither help them nor even help themselves?

ONLY GOD CAN PROTECT

[7:193] When you invite them to this guidance, they do not follow you. Thus, it is the same for them whether you invite them or not.
[7:194] The icons you invoke besides God are creatures like you. Go ahead and call upon them. Let them respond to you, if you are right.
[7:195] Do they have feet on which they walk? Do they have hands with which they defend themselves? Do they have eyes with which they see? Do they have ears with which they hear? Say: "Call upon your idols and ask them to smite me without delay."
[7:196] "God is the only one who sustains me and He is my Protector: the One who revealed this guidance. He is the one who protects those who do good.
[7:197] "As for the authorities you set up to equal or rival Him, they cannot help you, nor can they help themselves."
[7:198] When you invite them to this guidance, they do not hear. And when they look at you, they cannot see you.
[7:199] You shall resort to forgiveness, advocate tolerance and disregard the practices of the ignorant.[324]

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but ordinary men nonetheless. A messenger cannot gain any special benefit for himself, cannot foresee the future and cannot increase his wealth in any extraordinary way. They are, of course, of exalted character and they receive their reward in the life to come, but they have sacrificed much, not necessarily willingly (as in the case of Jonah) but they fulfilled their duty to God and deserve their just recompense. See verses 6:50; 17:73; 18:110; 40:66.

[322] **Couples** who have difficulty having children often approach mystics, quacks or professionals to help with having children. On the birth of a child the success may often be attributed to an amulet, ritual or medical procedure and not to God's ordinance, the laws that facilitated the successful birth. Even to jointly praise another along with God is shirk, the accepting of authorities to equal God. See verses and footnote 9:1-10.

[323] **Authority** that people assign to equal God can be movie stars, priests, magicians, politicians, leaders and even to lifeless things like 'lucky' stones, rabbit's feet, 'magic' rings etc.

THE WICKED LURE PEOPLE WITH GLAMOUR

[7:200] When shaitan, the egotistic Self, tries to enchant you with soft words and the glamour of easy gain, seek refuge in God. He is the Hearer and aware of all things.[325]

[7:201] Those who are righteous, whenever someone evil approaches them with a scheme, they remember God's guidance, whereupon they become aware of being drawn into wickedness.[326]

[7:202] Those who are wicked ceaselessly try to entice them away from this guidance.

FOLLOW THIS GUIDANCE - THERE IS NOTHING EQUAL TO IT

[7:203] When you do not produce a decree that suits them, they ask, "Why not make it up?" Say: "I simply follow this guidance revealed to me by my Sustainer." These are enlightenments from your Sustainer, a guidance and mercy for people who believe.

[7:204] When the Quran is recited, you shall listen to it and take heed that you may attain mercy.[327]

[7:205] You shall remember your Sustainer within yourself publicly, privately, and through the day and during the night. Do not be unaware.

[7:206] Those who understand accountability to your Sustainer are never too proud to serve Him; they glorify Him by following His guidance.

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[324] **Tolerance** and understanding is advocated at all times by God. A good example is the best weapon against evil and corrupt people. By applying this guidance individuals can excel in being good examples. See verse 16:125.

[325] **Shaitan is** the 'free will' aspect of the human Self and conscience, antagonistic to the better side. While influenced and drawn to this destructive way, an individual is not compelled to follow it. Man's Ego: Iblees, the shaitan, the 'free will' aspect of his Self which he needs to control though self-discipline and self-restraint by following guidance from God. See also verse 7:201; 14:22.

[326] **Evil proves that there is good.** When we correctly understand that evil is the displacement of order (the Quran terms this as *zulm*) we can then put it into context. Simply stated evil is the departure from the way that things should be. What this then means is that there must then be a way that things should be. While we can deny many things, we cannot deny that there is a need for order. Indeed order is seen throughout nature and the universe. If there is a way that things should be (order in the universe etc.) then it is reasonable to believe that there must be a design plan, and also reasonable to believe there must also be a transcendental being who produced that plan and determined (created and directed) how things should to be. It is the exception, the departure or displacement of order that proves the rule. Evil therefore proves the existence of order and by consequence, the existence of God. If atheists are right and there is no God, no design plan, no order or the way things should to be, then there can be no displacement of order - indeed then there can then be no evil. But who can deny that there is evil? See verses and footnotes 2:30; 10:109; 65:11. **Intelligent design** 68:52.

[327] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R. *quran*). **God's messenger** was encouraged to make-up alternative doctrines. See verses and footnotes 2:185; 10:35; 48:25. See also 17:73-25.

Sura 8: The Spoils of War (Al-Anfal)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[8:1] They consult you about the spoils of war. Say: "The spoils of war belong to God, the messenger and those who lead the campaign" You shall observe God, exhort one another to be righteous and obey God and His messenger, if you are believers.[328]

SINCERE BELIEVERS AND RELUCTANT BELIEVERS

[8:2] The true believers are those whose hearts tremble out of reverence when God is mentioned and when His guidance is shown to them their conviction is strengthened and they trust in the One who sustains them.
[8:3] They observe their commitments and from Our provisions to them they spend for the good of social welfare.[329]
[8:4] Such are the true believers. They attain high ranks at their Sustainer as well as dignity, protection and generous provisions.

[8:5] Your Sustainer provides ways for you to leave your system when you discover the truth, but some of you are exposed as reluctant believers.[330]
[8:6] They argued with you against the truth even after everything was explained to them. They acted as if they were being driven to certain death.
[8:7] Recall that God promised you victory over a certain group but you still wanted to face the weaker group. It was God's plan to establish the truth with His words and to defeat the disbelievers.
[8:8] For He has decreed that the truth shall prevail and all falsehood shall vanish, in spite of the evildoers.

VICTORY GUARANTEED FOR THE BELIEVERS

[8:9] Thus, when you implore your Sustainer to come to the rescue, He responds to you: "I support you in a multitude of ways in succession and motivate the energies within you."[331]
[8:10] God gives you this good news to strengthen your hearts: victory comes only from God. God is Almighty, Most Wise.

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[328] **The original** text says 'God and the messenger.' Since the messenger is no longer around, the spoils belong to those who lead the administrators. It is for them to distribute and utilise the war booty and anything they acquire through war efforts for the benefit of the people. Of course, God does not receive anything directly and His share is for the utility of deserving people.
[329] **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verse 2:215 and footnote.
[330] **Everyone** follows a system of one kind or another, whether they are aware of this or not. God wants you to leave your system and enter His System, to fulfil a specific role and a higher purpose in life.
[331] **The malaika** are the energies mentioned in this verses. See verses 2:30; 11:12.

[8:11] He causes peaceful slumber to overtake you and rest you, and He sends down water from the sky to clean you therewith. He protects you from the damaging effects, reassures your hearts and strengthens your foothold.
[8:12] Remember that your Sustainer motivates you with energies within yourselves: I am with you, so support those who believe. I will throw terror into the hearts of those who reject this guidance. You may advance on them: set forth on their necks and on every limb of their body.
[8:13] This is what they have justly incurred by opposing God and His message of guidance. For those who oppose God and His message, God's retribution is severe.
[8:14] This is to punish the disbelievers; they have incurred retribution in a hell of their own making.

[8:15] O you who believe, if you encounter the disbelievers who have mobilised to fight against you, do not turn back and flee.
[8:16] Anyone who turns back on that day, except to carry out a battle plan or to join his group, has incurred wrath from God and his abode is hell, what a miserable end.
[8:17] It is not you who kills them, God through his ordinance is the One who kills them. It is not you who attack when you carry out an assault, God is the One who overwhelms them by his ordinance. And He thus gives the believers an opportunity to perform a duty. God is Hearer and aware of all things.
[8:18] Additionally, God thus nullifies the schemes of the disbelievers.
[8:19] The disbelievers sought a conclusion and a closure which has now come: if they refrain from aggression it would be better for them, but if they return to war, so should the believers. Their armies will never help them, no matter how great. For God is on the side of those who believe and follow this guidance.[332]

[8:20] O you who believe, obey God and His message and do not disregard it while you hear this call.
[8:21] Do not be like those who say, "We are listening." when in reality they do not hear and are oblivious.
[8:22] The worst creatures in the sight of God are those who turn deaf and dumb to this message, those who resist understanding.

[332] **God** supports the believers, and believers are those who follow and implement this guidance in its entirely, and not partially or a distortion of it. While resourceful disbelievers can have success in this life, only believers are promised success both in this world *and* in the life yet to come. Around the world millions of people, while professing to be Muslims, follow the many perverted versions they call 'Islam'. This stunts their progress, they fall under oppressive and tyrannical rule and end up living in abject poverty. Many are then subjugated and mercilessly slaughtered - and then they wonder why. See verses 3:110; 3:139; 4:100; 6:48; 10:63-64; 10:103; 15:91; 16:41; 24:55; 30:47. See also 22:15-16.

[8:23] Had God known of any good in them, He would have made them hearers. Even if He made them hearers, they would still turn away in aversion.
[8:24] O you who believe, you shall respond to God and to this message because it invites you to that which gives you life. You should know that God is closer to you than your heart and before Him you will be summoned.

EVIL TRIUMPHS WHEN GOOD PEOPLE DO NOTHING

[8:25] Beware that suffering reaches not only those who are wicked. It reverberates throughout your community. You should know that God's retribution is severe.[333]

[8:26] Remember that you used to be few and oppressed, fearing that some people may eliminate you, and He granted you a secure sanctuary, supported you with His victory and provided you with good provisions that you may be appreciative.
[8:27] O you who believe do not betray God and this message and do not betray those who trust you, now that you know.

WEALTH & FAMILY: THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE

[8:28] You should know that your money and your children are a test and that it is God who possesses a great recompense.
[8:29] O you who believe: if you do your duty to God, He will enlighten you, remit your wrongful acts and protect you. God possesses infinite grace.
[8:30] The disbelievers conspire and scheme to neutralise you or kill you or banish you. However, they plot and plan, but God also plans and God is the best of planners.
[8:31] When Our revelations are recited to them, they say: "We have heard you. If we wanted to, we could have said the same things. These are no more than stories from the past."
[8:32] They also said, "Our God, if this is really the truth from You, then shower us with rocks from the sky or pour upon us a painful punishment."
[8:33] However, God will not punish them while you are in their midst. God will not to punish them while they seek protection.

[333] **Why do bad things happen to good people?** The manifestation of evil is nothing, except the consequences of those who watch without doing anything to stop it from happening. In these circumstances, wickedness percolates through society and affects even those who have done nothing wrong, except that they have done nothing at all. People can elect good administrators or bad administrators and as a result, we live in harmony or suffer in turmoil. See verses and footnotes 3:104, 110, 114; 7:157; 9:71; 9:73; 9:112; 22:41; 31:17. **Martyrdom:** Mu'mins, those convinced by this guidance, are prepared to fight for a just cause and are prepared to kill or get killed. See verses and footnotes 3:158: 4:74-78.

[8:34] Have they not deserved God's retribution, by repelling others from the Sanctioned Submissions, even though they are not its custodians? The true custodians are those who do good but most of them do not know.
[8:35] Their commitments towards God's System were no more than a mockery and a means of repelling some people. Therefore, suffer the retribution for the reality of your disbelief.
[8:36] Those who disbelieve spend their money to repel others from the way of God. They spend as they will, then it will become an anguish for them. Ultimately, they will be defeated and all disbelievers will be summoned to a future of turmoil, a hell of their own making.
[8:37] God will separate the evil from the good, and the evil will clamber upon each other, then heaped together, they will fall over themselves in a hell of their own making. Such are the losers.
[8:38] Warn those who reject this guidance: if they stop their rebellious conduct, they will be protected from their past misdeeds. But if they return to their destructive ways, they will incur the same consequences as the transgressors before them.
[8:39] The believers should fight them to ward off insurrection and to implement the system of your Deen from God. They should refrain from aggression; God fully sees everything they do.[334]
[8:40] If they turn away, then you should know that God is the one who sustains you and is your protector: the best Sustainer, the best Protector and the best Supporter.
[8:41] You should know that when you gain any spoils in war, one-fifth shall be in the name of God and go to the administrator, to be given to the needy relatives, the orphans, the poor and the refugees. You will do this if you believe in God and in this guidance that We revealed to Our servant on the day of decision, the day the armed conflict began. God is All-powerful.[335]

EVERYTHING HAPPENS ACCORDING TO GOD'S ORDINANCE

[8:42] Recall the event when you were on one side of the valley's fringe, while they were on the other side. Then their caravan had to move to lower ground. Had you planned it this way, you could not have done it. These trials happened only according to God's ordinance. Those to be destroyed were annihilated and those who were to remain alive, survived. God is Hearer and aware of all things.

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[334] **Martyrdom:** Mu'mins, those convinced by this guidance, are prepared to fight for a just cause and to kill or get killed, and they receive their well deserved reward from God. See verses and footnotes 2:191-3; 3:158; 4:74-78. **Aggression** is forbidden. See verses and footnotes 4:78.
[335] **What** was said in 8:1 is further expanded here. God and his messenger's share of war spoils are really for the benefit of those in need.

[8:43] God made them appear in your mind fewer in number. Had He made them appear more numerous, you would have failed and you would have disputed among yourselves. But God saved the day. He is knower of your innermost thoughts.
[8:44] And when the time came and you faced them, He made them appear fewer in your eyes and made you appear contemptible in their eyes. For God willed to carry out his plan. All decisions are made by God.
[8:45] O you who believe, when you encounter a force, be firm with your Self and remember God's support that you may overcome any difficulty.
[8:46] You shall believe in accountability to God and follow this guidance that His messenger brought and do not dispute among yourselves, lest you fail and lose your strength of unity. You shall steadfastly persevere. God is with those who steadfastly persevere.

EGO MAKES PEOPLE ARROGANT

[8:47] Do not be like those who left their own system[336] grudgingly, only to show off and in fact discouraged others from following the path of God. God is fully aware of everything they do.
[8:48] Their ego made them over-confident and they thought, "I cannot be defeated by any people today," and "I have strength to protect myself." But as soon as the two armies faced each other, they panicked and lost their self-assurance, turned back on their heels and fled. Their boldness abandoned them and they said "I feel what I cannot explain. I am afraid of God. God's retribution is awesome."
[8:49] The hypocrites and those who harbour doubt in their hearts say: "These people are deceived by their deen." However, the one who puts his trust in God will then find God is Almighty, Most Wise.
[8:50] If you could only see those who disbelieved when the malaika put them to death. Their outcome will be determined and set forth from both ends without escape. Taste the retribution of a hell of your own making.
[8:51] "This is a consequence of what your hands have sent forth. God is never unjust towards his creations."
[8:52] This is the same consequence as that of Firawn's people and those who disbelieved in God's guidance before them. They rejected God's guidance and God punished them for their wrongdoing. God is powerful and His retribution is severe.

[336] **It is difficult** to leave your own system (a religion, a faith, a political system or another belief of some sort) and follow God's System: Deen-Islam. When you apply Deen-Islam it supersedes all other systems. See verses and footnotes 3:85; 3:95; 8:5.

RETRIBUTION: A CONSEQUENCE OF REGRESSIVE ACTION

[8:53] In accordance with God's ordinance the circumstances of any people do not change unless they make changes in their own Self.[337] God is Hearer and aware of all things.

[8:54] Such was the case with the people of Firawn and others before them. They first rejected the signs of their Sustainer. Consequently, We annihilated them for their wrongful deeds. We drowned Firawn's people. The wicked are consistently punished.

[8:55] The worst creatures in the sight of God are those who disbelieve in this guidance; the ungrateful cannot believe.

[8:56] You reach agreements with them, but they violate their agreements every time; they are not good people.[338]

[8:57] Therefore if you encounter them in adversity, you shall make examples of them so that others may take note and avoid what they did.

[8:58] When you are betrayed, mistreated or abused by any people, you shall take action to teach them lessons of good conduct. God does not care for those who manifest evil works.[339]

[8:59] Let not those who disbelieve in this guidance think that they can get away with it. They can never escape.

[8:60] You shall prepare against them all the power you can marshal and all the equipment you can mobilise, that you may terrify the enemies of God, your enemies, as well as others who are not known to you, but God knows them. Whatever you spend in the cause of God will be repaid to you generously, without the least injustice.[340]

[8:61] If they resort to peace, so shall you, and put your trust in God. He is the Hearer and aware of all things.

GOD SUPPORTS THE BELIEVERS

[8:62] If they want to deceive you, then accountability to God will be sufficient for you. He will help you with His support and with the believers.

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[337] **Only** when individuals and communities become active to progress their lives do they attract the laws of God to support them and push forward the procession of life. There will be no change in your life unless YOU change what is within your Self. Be the change you wish to see. See verses 8:25; 13:11.

[338] **This also** applies to everyday promises that people make to each other, then break them just as easily as they made them. See verse and footnote 2:177.

[339] **Appropriate** action should be taken against individuals, communities and states who create fear and turmoil. See verses and footnotes 4:75-76; 8:55-61; 42:39. **Zero Tolerance:** The rejecters of this guidance, those who threaten peace and security, should be dealt with strictly at all times. See verse and footnote 9.73.

[340] **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verse and footnote 2:215.

[8:63] He has brought together the hearts of the believers. Had you spent all the money on earth, you could not have put it to right without guidance. But God did reconcile them. He is Almighty, Most Wise.

BELIEVERS: FEWER IN NUMBER BUT GREATER IN POWER

[8:64] O you who believe in this message, sufficient for you is God and those believers who have followed it.

[8:65] This message of guidance advocates the believers to fight when necessary. If there are twenty of you who are steadfast, they can defeat two hundred, and a hundred of you can defeat a thousand of those who disbelieve. That is because the disbelievers are people who do not understand God's ordinance.

[8:66] For now God has made it easier for you, for He knows that there are presently weaknesses in you. So for now, a hundred steadfast believers can defeat two hundred, and a thousand of you can defeat two thousand by God's leave. God is with those who steadfastly persevere.[341]

[8:67] No messenger or leader shall acquire captives, unless he participates in fighting. You people are seeking the materials of this world, while God advocates the life that is to come. God is Almighty, Most Wise.

[8:68] Had events not unfolded according to the ordinance of God, you would have suffered on account of what you took, a terrible retribution.

[8:69] Therefore enjoy from the spoils you have earned, only that which is lawful and good, and keep your duty to God. God is Protector, Most Merciful.

[8:70] O messenger, tell the prisoners of war in your custody, "If God knew of anything good in your hearts, He would have given you better than anything you have lost and would have protected you. God is Protector, Most Merciful."

[8:71] And if they want to betray you, they have already betrayed God. This is why He made them the losers. God is aware of all things, Most Wise.

[8:72] Surely, those who believe in this guidance and take the challenge[342] and strive with their money and their lives in the cause of God, as well as those who help them and give them protection and support them, they are

[341] **In times** of preparation there may be some debility so the ratio is different. However, a muslim need not fear death, and such a trained and experienced individual will indeed be feared and can defeat many times his number. There is no doubt that a small group of committed believers can change the world - it's the only thing that ever has. See verses and footnote 3:151-158; 4:74-78.

[342] **Challenge,** confront, trial, (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). This challenge is for those who accept this guidance and are prepared to face the challenges and strive against those who cause corruption in the world and set up authorities (religious or political) to rival or equal God, that is those who make rules and laws in conflict with Quranic values and create fear and turmoil instead of peace and security. See verse and footnote: 2:76.

allies of one another. As for those who believe, but do not confront any difficulties with you, you do not owe them any support until they take up the challenge. However, if they need your help, as brothers with the same convictions, you shall help them, except against people with whom you have signed a peace treaty. God sees everything you do.
[8:73] Those who disbelieve are allies of one another. Unless you keep to this guidance, there will be chaos on earth and great corruption.
[8:74] Those who believe in this guidance and face the challenges of life and strive in the cause of God, as well as those who help them and give them protection and support them, these are the true believers. They have deserved God's protection and a generous recompense.
[8:75] Those who also believed in this guidance afterwards and took the challenges of life and strive with you, they belong with you. Those who are related to each other shall be the first to support each other in accordance with God's commandments. God is fully aware of all things.[343]

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[343] **Challenges of life:** The Quranic definition for Islam is *'deen'. Deen,* however, is not a synonym for religion. *Deen* is a broader and deeper concept and means a system, the results of which can be measured. Religion usually means a set of dogmas, some elaborate rituals and a host of trivial practices. Ordinary activities of life are hedged in by a number of rules and rites. Simple necessary activities such as eating and marriage are surrounded by complex ceremonies. Man's conduct in everyday life is regulated in the smallest detail. *Deen*, as presented in the Quran, is not a matter of ritual or ceremony. It is concerned with the broad aim of life and the programme of action by which that aim can be attained. *Deen* gives full scope to man's initiative and discretion. It is meant for a free and intelligent person, a person who has the courage to think, judge and act for himself. *Deen* offers unchanging principles and Permanent Values that give guidance to man in the adventure of life and which enable him to attain the goal of Self-realization. These principles, however, are not meant to be followed blindly. They are to be applied with intelligence and forethought. **Drifter:** see verse and footnote 15:42. **The *deen* of Islam** does not lay on man a heavy burden of rules and regulations. It merely gives him guidance where he needs it. Man should seek the aid of *deen* in obtaining inspiration and vision. Unlike religion, *deen* is not an opiate, as the Marxist contends, but a stimulant and a spur to action. *Deen-Islam* does not induce in us contentment with things as they are, it spurs us on to efforts directed to the establishment of a better order of society. On the other hand, religion inculcates a passive resignation and complete submission to authority, however oppressive and unjust it may be. At best, it counsels us to have recourse to passive resistance. *Deen* calls upon us to fight against injustice and oppression and to actively promote the cause of justice. Another characteristic of *deen* distinguishes it from religion is that *Deen-Islam* is forward-looking: the ideal it embodies beckons to man from the future. Like a beacon it guides his steps towards a glorious destiny. *Deen* does not want man to keep gazing, awe-struck, at some golden age in the remote and dim past: man's duty is not to retrace his steps but to advance in the direction of futurity. *Deen* is prospective, not retrospective. **The Quran** insists upon explicit conviction which it calls *iman.* A number of verses in the Quran make it clear that compulsion has no place in the sphere of *Deen-Islam. Deen-Islam* must be accepted freely and voluntarily by man. A belief that is forcibly imposed on an individual has no value for him or for the world at large. Man has the right to exercise free choice in the matter of *Deen-Islam.* If this command is accepted, it will certainly put an end to all fanaticism and religious disputes. Understood rightly, this injunction is the charter of freedom of thought and expression even to those who do not believe in it**. Destiny:** See verse and footnote 97:1.

Sura 9: The Repentance (Tawbah)[344]

[9:1] An ultimatum is issued here from God and His messenger to those who commit treason and serve authorities to rank with God, and to those who enter into a treaty with you:
[9:2] Move around freely for four fixed months as a cessation of hostilities, and know that you cannot escape from God, and that the disbelievers are humiliated through the ordinance of God.

HAJJ-I-AKBAR: THE GREAT CHALLENGE

[9:3] A proclamation is issued here from God and His messenger for all people to inform them of the Day of the Great Challenge[345] and to let them know that God and His messenger condemn the mushrikeen: the traitors who serve authorities to rank with Him. Thus, if the mushrikeen repent, it would be better for them. But if they turn away, then let them know that they can never escape from God. Promise those who reject this guidance a painful consequence.
[9:4] If the mushrikeen sign a peace treaty with you and do not violate it nor aid others against you, you shall fulfil your treaty with them until its term expires. God supports those who maintain good conduct.[346]
[9:5] Once the restricted months of the treaty are over and the mushrikeen still refuse to make peace, you may then slay them wherever you encounter them, overcome and punish them and watch them carefully at every place. If they repent and observe their agreed commitments and keep them pure,

[344] **This Sura** does not begin "In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent." However, Sura 27 has two such invocations, the second one being in the letter from Solomon. This Sura is about war on treachery and terrorism and impeding the activities of traitors and terrorists.
[345] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). The Day of the Great challenge is when a declaration is made to those mushrikeen who actively wage war against muslims. The muslims, the truth bearers, are the ones who believe and implement this guidance. They challenge the mushrikeen to renounce their treacherous and criminal activities and agree to make peace, giving them a four month period of grace - cessation of hostilities - thus allowing them time to reflect, before taking any action against them. Peace treaties when made, however, must be honoured. See verses and footnotes: 2:76; 9:73. **Peace at any price?** See footnote to 47:35.
[346] **Treachery,** treason. (Arabic: *shirk.* Root SH'R'K. Derivatives: *mushrik, mushrikeen, sharika, shareek, sharaka, ashraka*). Those who accept an authority to rival God are *mushrikeen*: the ones who commit *shirk*, an act of high treason, treachery against God and his laws. As this verse shows, only those who actively wage war against muslims can be killed, other *mushrikeen* are to be given protection, should they so wish. Furthermore, they cannot be compelled to accept Deen-Islam, but must abide by its laws if they live in a state where such an administration exists. See verses and footnotes: 2:22; 3:83; 3:85; 6:19; 6:22-23; 6:144; 6:121; 6:145; 6:159; 7:162; 7:185; 7:190; 12:106; 14:35; 16:56; 16:100; 24:54; 30:32-33; 42:42; 68:36-41. **Mushrikeen:** See footnote to verse 2:105. **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112 & footnotes to 2:105 & 47:35.

then you shall give them freedom to move around. God is Protector, Most Merciful.[347]
[9:6] If any of these seek help from you, you shall protect them, so that they can hear the guidance of God, then send them back to their place of safety. That is because they are people who do not know.
[9:7] How can those who commit treason by setting up authorities to rank with God demand any pledge from God and from His messenger? Exempted are those who have signed a peace treaty with you to accept the Sanctioned Submissions. If they honour and uphold such a treaty, you shall uphold it as well. God cares for those who do good.
[9:8] How can they demand an undertaking when they never considered any of your rights and any of your promises when they had the upper hand. They pacified you with lip service, while their hearts were in true opposition to you and the majority of them are most wicked.
[9:9] They traded away God's guidance for a cheap and a short term gain. Consequently, they repulsed many people from His path. Miserable indeed is what they did.
[9:10] They never observe any rights of kinship towards any believer, nor do they uphold their covenants, these are the real transgressors.

REPENTANCE: ROAD TO CHANGE

[9:11] If they repent and observe their commitments and keep them pure, then they are your brothers in this Deen, sharing your values. We thus explain the revelations for people who know.
[9:12] If they violate their oaths after pledging to keep their promises and attack your way of life, the Deen-Islam, you may fight the mushrikeen: those who set up authorities to rival God, that they may refrain, and you are no longer bound by your covenant with them.
[9:13] Would you not fight people who violated their treaties, tried to banish the messenger and they are the ones who started the war in the first place? Are you afraid of them? God is the One you should keep your duty to, if you believe in this guidance.

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[347] **Commitments** (Arabic: *solaa*) with disbelievers, idol worshippers and mushrikeen. [Verses 9:5-10]. The words *arba'atum hurumun* used in the original Arabic of this verse means 'four of them (the months) are *restricted*'. The four restricted months in verse 9:2 is in reference to the cooling off period upon a declaration of war. The mushrikeen and the disbelievers are to be given four months' freedom of movement and time to decide about their acceptance of the Deen-Islam, and where commitments were agreed they are obliged to keep them. See footnote to verse 2:3. **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112. **Action against mushrikeen:** verses 9:1-15 need to be read together to get the full picture. This is about military action as part of a war effort against enemies and traitors. Only those mushrikeen who are active and a threat to muslims are the ones that may be killed. Those who ask for help must be helped and peace treaties must be upheld. See verse and footnote 4:137. See also verses 4:101-106; 60:8-13.

[9:14] You shall fight them, for God will punish them at your hands, humiliate them, grant you victory over them and cool the hearts of those who believe in this guidance.
[9:15] He will also remove anger from the hearts of those who believe. God redeems according to His ordinance. God is aware of all things, Most Wise.

GOD DISTINGUISHES THE BELIEVERS

[9:16] Did you think that you will be left alone without God distinguishing those among you who strive and never ally themselves with God's enemies or the enemies of His messenger or the enemies of the believers? God is fully acquainted with everything you do.
[9:17] Those who set up authorities to equal God will never be totally compliant with the submissions of God. These have nullified their works and they will abide in a state of hell forever.
[9:18] The only people who deserve to give life and to prosper the submissions prescribed by God are those who believe in God and accountability to Him, and uphold their commitments and keep them pure, and revere none in place of God. These are surely among the guided ones.[348]
[9:19] Have you considered those who take the challenge of the Sanctioned Submissions, believing in God and accountability to Him and striving in the cause of God? All are not equal in the sight of God. God does not guide the wicked people.[349]
[9:20] Those who believe and respond to the challenge and strive in the cause of God with their money and their lives rank far higher in the sight of God. These are the ones who will prosper.
[9:21] Their Sustainer gives them good news: mercy and approval from Him and a future of harmony where they enjoy an everlasting life.
[9:22] Eternally they abide therein. God possesses a great recompense.

PARENTS & CHILDREN CAN BE ENEMIES

[9:23] O you who believe, do not ally yourselves even with your parents and your siblings, if they prefer rejecting this guidance over believing. Those among you who ally themselves with them are transgressing.

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[348] **Prosper,** to give life, sustain, cultivate or flourish. (Arabic: *amr* root M'R. Derivatives: *amaru-ha, m'amur, ya'muru*). **People's *umra*:** To give life to the Sanctioned Submissions, the Deen-Islam and make it prosper by following the System of God through His guidance in the Quran. This means to establish a society based on Quranic values and looking after the planet for future generations as its custodians; this is the *umra* by people. **God's *umra*:** God as sustainer of the heavens and the earth ensures it remains a living system; this is God's *umra*. See verse 11:61. Man did not appear on earth as if by some magic or miracle: God evolved life through his living system. Now people too have the responsibility to maintain the planet and ensure it prospers through good management of the environment. See verses and footnotes 5:2-5; 30:9; 35:11; 52:2-6.
[349] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). See verse and footnote: 2:76.

[9:24] Proclaim: "If your parents, your children, your siblings, your spouses, your family, the money you have earned and the possessions you worry about and the homes you cherish are more treasured to you than God and His guidance and the striving in His cause, then just wait until God brings His judgment." God does not guide the wicked people.
[9:25] God has granted you victory in many situations. But on the day of Hunayn, you became too proud of your great number. Consequently, it did not help you at all and the spacious earth became so straitened around you, that you turned around and fled.
[9:26] Then God sent down contentment upon His messenger and upon the believers. And He sent down forces of destruction, that you could not see. He thus punished those who disbelieved. This was the deserved punishment for the disbelievers.
[9:27] Ultimately, God redeems according to his ordinance. God is Protector, Most Merciful.
[9:28] O you who believe, those who set up authorities to equal God, their minds are polluted, they cannot advance to the Sanctioned Submissions. If you fear loss of income, God will shower you with His provisions, in accordance with His ordinance. God most Wise is aware of all things.
[9:29] You shall actively stand firm against those who do not believe in God, in accountability to Him, and nor do they forbid what God has prohibited in this guidance, nor do they abide by Deen-Islam, the system of truth and among those who received the guidance, until they pay their dues, willingly or unwillingly.[350]

GOD CONDEMNS THOSE WHO ASCRIBE SONS TO HIM

[9:30] The Jews said, "Ezra is the son of God," while the Christians said, "Jesus is the son of God." These are blasphemies on their lips. They thus match the blasphemies of those who have disbelieved in the past. God condemns them. They have surely deviated.

UPHOLD GOD'S SYSTEM - NOT RELIGIONS

[9:31] They have set up their leaders and priests as authorities to rank with God. Others deified the messiah, son of Mary. They were all commanded to serve only the One God. There is no authority to rank with Him. Be He glorified, high above having any authority to equal Him.[351]

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[350] **First apply** this guidance, become strong and then strive to implement this system in your society, and should the need arise, you must fight those who go against the laws of justice and truth. **Dues** are taxes and excise money payable to a legitimate administrative authority and can also be reparation or compensation paid by a defeated enemy, as is the case in any such situation.
[351] **Leaders** - religious and others: rabbis, priests, imams, mullahs, politicians etc. should be rejected when they instruct people to uphold teachings that conflict with Quranic principles.

[9:32] They want to put out God's light with the things they invent about him, but God insists upon perfecting His light in spite of the disbelievers.
[9:33] He is the One who sent His messenger with this guidance and the Deen-Islam: the System of truth, and it will prevail over all systems, in spite of those who set up authorities to rival God.

BEWARE OF ROGUES AND CHARLATANS

[9:34] O you who believe, many religious leaders and preachers will take your money illicitly and repel you from the path of God. Those who hoard gold and silver and do not spend it in the cause of God, promise them a painful retribution.[352]
[9:35] The day will come when their gold and silver are smelted to create a hell of their own making that will surround them with an intensity most severe: "This is what you hoarded for yourselves, so taste what you have accumulated."

DON'T ALTERNATE THE MONTHS OF THE YEAR

[9:36] The count of months as God has ordained is twelve. This has been God's ordinance since the day He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are restricted.[353] This is the perfect System: you shall not wrong your Self by fighting during the restricted months. However, you can declare all-out war against the mushrikeen: those traitors who set up authority to rank with God, even during the restricted months when they declare all-out war against you, and know that God is on the side of those who keep good conduct.
[9:37] Altering the months is a sign of excessive scepticism. It augments the straying of those who have disbelieved. They alternate the months within the regular cycle of months, while preserving the number of months consecrated by God. They thus violate what God has decreed. Their evil works seem good in their eyes. God does not guide the disbelieving people.

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[352] **Religious preachers** have set up shop to make money. They fleece their flocks from birth to death for performing rites and rituals such as baptisements, weddings, funerals, pilgrimages and special prayers etc. It's all business and nothing to do with improving the well being of society. Religious institutions also opulently decorate churches, mosques and temples. This wealth (gold and silver) could be better invested in hospitals, schools. etc. Sadly the followers of religion would have it no other way. As Mark Twain said "It's easier to fool people than to convince them that they have been fooled." Islam is not a religion and there are no rites, rituals or need for priests and clergy, and the messengers did not ask for any wages. See verse 11:51.
[353] **The restricted months** are determined by the administration of the day. Presently in religious Arabic calendars, the months alternate with each month occurring in a different season each year, simulating the alternation that verse 9:37 mentions. The restricted months are not for religious rituals. See footnote to 11:51. Mushrikeen: See verses 2:105; 9:2-12.

[9:38] O you who believe, when you are told, "Be active in the cause of God," why then do you become heavily attached to your homes? Have you chosen this worldly life in place of the better future? The materials of this world compared to the coming life are nothing.
[9:39] Unless you move to improve your life, He will commit you to painful retribution and substitute other people in your place. You can never harm God in the least. God is the one who is All-powerful.
[9:40] If you fail to support the messenger,[354] God has already supported him. Thus, when the disbelievers pursued him and he was one of two in the cave, he said to his friend, "Do not worry. God is with us." God then sent down contentment and security upon him and supported him with protection that could not be seen. He made the word of the disbelievers lowly. God's word reigns supreme. God is Almighty, Most Wise.
[9:41] You shall readily mobilise, light or heavy and strive with your money and your lives in the cause of God. This is better for you, if you only knew.
[9:42] If there is a quick material gain and a short journey, they would have followed you. But the striving is just too much for them. They will swear by God: "If we could, we would have mobilized with you." They thus hurt themselves and God knows that they are liars.
[9:43] God has pardoned you. Why did you give them permission to stay behind, before you could distinguish those who are truthful from the liars?[355]

[9:44] Those who truly believe in God and the day of reckoning do not ask your permission but look for the opportunity to strive with their money and their lives. God is fully aware of the righteous.
[9:45] The only people who wish to be excused are those who do not really believe in God and the day of reckoning. Their hearts are full of doubt and their doubts cause them to dither.
[9:46] Had they really wanted to mobilise, they would have prepared for it thoroughly. But God disliked their half-hearted participation, so were discouraged. They were told: "Stay behind with those who are staying behind."
[9:47] Had they mobilised with you, they would have created confusion and would have caused disputes and divisions among you. Some of you were inclined to listen to them. God is fully aware of the transgressors.
[9:48] They sought to spread confusion among you in the past and confounded the matters for you. However, the truth ultimately prevails and God's plan is carried out in spite of them.

[354] **This refers** to the messenger, when he was alive, but believers should support the administration of the day, as the messenger is no longer around to lead. See verse 8:1.
[355] **God's messengers** were human beings and had human failings. See verse and footnote 40:66.

[9:49] Some of them said: "Give me permission to stay behind, do not impose such hardship on me." In fact, they have thus incurred a terrible hardship. A hell of their own making is surrounding the disbelievers.
[9:50] If something good happens to you, they feel upset and if an affliction befalls you, they say, "We told you so," as they turn away rejoicing.
[9:51] Say: "Nothing happens to us except according to God's ordinance.[356] He is our Sustainer and Benefactor. In God the believers shall trust."
[9:52] Say: "You can only expect for us one of two good things: victory or martyrdom. While we expect for you condemnation from God and a retribution from Him or defeat at our hands. Therefore, wait and we will wait along with you."
[9:53] Say: "Give your contributions, willingly or unwillingly. Nothing will be accepted from you, for you are evil people."
[9:54] What prevented the acceptance of their contributions is that they disbelieved in God and His guidance and when they observed their commitments, they observed them with indifference and when they spent their money for the welfare of society, they did so grudgingly.

DON'T BE IMPRESSED BY APPARENT SUCCESS

[9:55] Do not be impressed by their money or their children. While they are disbelievers, God causes these to be sources of retribution for them in this life, and their Self diminishes and perishes in manifest denial.
[9:56] They swear by God that they belong with you, while they do not belong with you. They are a divisive people.
[9:57] If they could find refuge in a cave or any hiding place, they would go to it rushing.
[9:58] Some of them criticise your integrity in your sincere works. If they receive something they become satisfied, but if they are not given anything, then they become objectors.
[9:59] They should be satisfied with what God and His messenger have given them. They should have said, "God suffices for us. God will provide for us from His bounties and so will His messenger. We are seeking only to serve God."

HELP THOSE IN NEED

[9:60] Your sincere aid shall be for the poor, the needy, to free the captives and the slaves, to those burdened by debt, for the refugees, those accepting this guidance, those who work in the cause of God and those who

[356] **God's ordinance** means God's laws: the outcome is the result of our choices. Fatalism is against the principles of free will. God knows all the probabilities and this does not negate our freedom to make choices. See verses 6:59; 57:22; 97:1. **Martyrdom:** Mu'mins, those convinced by this guidance, are prepared to fight for a just cause and to kill or get killed, and they receive their well deserved reward from God. See verses and footnotes 3:158; 4:74-8.

administer it. Such is God's commandment. God is aware of all things, Most Wise.[357]
[9:61] Some of them hurt the messenger by saying, "He is keeping an eye on us." Say: "It is better for you that I am watchful over you. I believe in God and trust the believers. I bring healing for those among you who believe." Those who hurt God's messenger have incurred a painful retribution.[358]
[9:62] They swear by God, to please people, when good deeds would be better received by God and His messenger - far more than lip service, if they really are believers in this guidance.

THE HYPOCRITES' BELIEF EXPOSED AS FALSEHOOD

[9:63] Did they not know that anyone who opposes God and His messenger has created a hell fire of their own making and will burn in it forever? This is the worst humiliation.[359]
[9:64] The hypocrites worry that a verse may be revealed exposing what is really inside their hearts. Say: "Go ahead and ridicule this if you want. God will expose exactly what you are afraid of."[360]
[9:65] If you ask them, they will say, "We were only joking, don't worry about it." Say: "Do you realise that you are mocking God, His guidance and His messenger?"
[9:66] Those who deride this message will not be able to apologise for their contemptuous behaviour. They have disbelieved after having believed. If We pardon some of them who made a lapse of judgement, We will punish others among you who are malicious, as a consequence of their wickedness.
[9:67] The hypocrite men and the hypocrite women belong with each other - they encourage evil and distract people from righteousness and they are miserly in their works for the good of others. They forget they are

[357] **Social Welfare** aid and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. The responsibility is for the government to collect and administer such funds as part of an all-encompassing social welfare plan, and not for charities to undertake such work. The Quran does not advocate charity but decrees dignity that social welfare gives. See verse 2:215 and footnote.
[358] **Those who** caused mischief amidst the messenger and those who cause mischief to the administration and to society in general will be severely dealt with by God.
[359] **Opposing** the messenger of God and now this message and those who administer His laws, face a torment that will be everlasting. The messenger is no longer here, so this now means God and His message, the Quran revealed to His messenger. For all intents and purposes this is exactly the same as following the messenger because that is what he advocated. See verse and footnote 6:19.
[360] **The hypocrites'** belief is ultimatley exposed as false and what they say reveals even greater lies. Hypocrite (Arabic: *munafiq.* Root N'F'Q). The *munafiq* hold back in everything except that which is in their self-interest. See verse and footnote 2:8.

accountable to God, so He consigns them to oblivion. The hypocrites are truly most wicked.
[9:68] God promises the hypocrite men and the hypocrite women, as well as the disbelievers, the rejecters of this guidance, a fire in a hell of their own making, wherein they abide forever. It's enough for them. God has condemned them, they have incurred everlasting punishment.
[9:69] Some of those before you were stronger than you and possessed more money and more children. They became preoccupied with their material possessions. Similarly, you have become preoccupied with your material possessions, just like those before you became preoccupied. You have become totally heedless of this guidance, just as they were heedless of this guidance. Such are the people who nullify their works both in this world and in the life yet to come, they are the losers.

THE LOSERS AND WINNERS

[9:70] Have they not learned anything from the previous generations: the people of Noah, Aad, Thamud, the people of Abraham, the dwellers of Midyan and the disaster that fell upon them? God's messengers from among them went to them with clear proofs. God never wronged them, they are the ones who wronged their own Self.
[9:71] The believing men and the believing women are allies of one another. They advocate all things that progress society and forbid all things harmful, they observe their commitments and keep them pure and they obey God and follow His messenger. These will have an abundance of good in their life by God's mercy. God is Almighty, Most Wise.[361]
[9:72] God promises the believing men and the believing women a profusion of good things beyond imagination. By illustration of things in this world, they will have gardens watered with flowing streams, wherein they abide forever and magnificent mansions and a life of tranquillity and harmony. Bounties that manifest God's greatness and His approval are the highest achievement.[362]

[361] **Why** do bad things happen to good people? See verse and footnote 8:25.
[362] **Can a foetus** imagine, from the comfort of the womb, what wonders lie in its coming life?. Similarly, a human cannot envisage what the life yet to come will be like and descriptions in which he finds harmony are used as allegories to describe this future life. There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly and nothing in a human being that reveals what he is to become after the transition period of 'death'. **God's message:** since the messenger is no longer here, it is God's message, the message that the messenger conveyed, that should be followed. **God's greatness:** (Arabic: *Allahi-akbar*). See verses 6:19; 29:45.

A COMMAND FOR ALL THE BELIEVERS

[9:73] O messenger, strive against those who reject this guidance and strive against the hypocrites, and be stern in dealing with them. Their end is hell. What a miserable abode.[363]

[9:74] They swear by God that they never said it, although they have uttered the words of disbelief. They have disbelieved in this guidance after having submitted to it. In fact, they gave up when gains they desired were not made. They have rebelled even though God and His messenger have showered them with His grace and provisions. If they repent, it would be best for them. But if they turn away, God will commit them to painful retribution in this life and in the life to come. They will find no one on earth to be their Sustainer and Protector.

[9:75] Some of them even pledged: "If God showered us with His grace, we would be sincere and would lead a righteous life."

[9:76] But when He did bless them with His provisions they became miserly and turned away in aversion.

[9:77] Consequently a plague of hypocrisy descended into their hearts and will remain until the day of reckoning. This is because they broke their promises to God and because of their lying.

[9:78] Do they not realise that God knows their secrets and their conspiracies and that God is the knower of all secrets?

[9:79] Those who criticise the generous believers for giving too much and ridicule the poor believers for giving too little, God despises them. They have incurred a painful retribution.

[9:80] Whether you ask protection for the hypocrites or you do not ask protection for them, even if you ask for their protection seventy times, God will not protect them. This is because they disbelieve in God and His messenger. God does not guide the wicked people.[364]

THE FATE OF THE LAZY

[9:81] The sedentary rejoiced in their staying behind when they should have stood shoulder to shoulder with the messenger of God and hated to strive with their money and their lives in the cause of God. They said, "Let

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[363] **Zero Tolerance:** The laws and values given in this guidance are of paramount importance for creating a secure and peaceful society and there should be no compromise. Therefore, it is essential that the rejecters should be dealt with strictly and justly at all times. When God is addressing the messenger, it is by extension, a command for the believers of this message, since the messenger is now no longer alive and here. See verses and footnotes 3:158; 4:75; 8:58; 9:1-15; 47:35. **God's greatness:** See verses 29:45 and also 6:19.

[364] **Muhammad** could not intercede on behalf of his own uncle, what makes strangers who never met him think that he will intercede on their behalf? Also, Abraham could not intercede on behalf of his father, nor could Noah intercede on behalf of his son. See verses and footnotes 2:254; 11:46; 60:4. **Intercession:** See verses and footnote 2:254. See also 111:1-5.

us not do anything in this heat!" Say to them, "The fiery state of hell is far hotter," if they could only understand.[365]
[9:82] Let them laugh a little and they will cry a lot. This is the punishment they have earned for their wrongdoing.
[9:83] If God returns you to a situation where they ask your permission to accompany you, say to them, "You will never again accompany me, nor will you ever fight alongside me against any of our enemies. For you have chosen to be armchair fighters. Therefore, you must stay at home."
[9:84] You shall not observe any commitments for them at their funeral for any of them when they die, nor shall you stand at any of their graves to express sympathy. They have disbelieved in God and His messenger and died in a state of wickedness.

MONEY: ONLY TO GREASE THE WHEELS OF LIFE

[9:85] Do not be impressed by their money or their children. God causes these to be sources of misery for them in this world and their Self departs weak and undeveloped.
[9:86] When a verse is revealed, stating: "Believe in God and strive with His messenger," even the strong among them say, "Let us stay behind"
[9:87] They chose to be with those who are useless. Consequently, their hearts became sealed, and thus they cannot comprehend.

BELIEVERS STRIVE WITH THEIR MONEY & LIVES

[9:88] As for the messenger and those who believed with him, they eagerly strive with their money and their lives. These have deserved all the good things. They are the successful ones.
[9:89] God has prepared for them gardens watered with flowing streams wherein they abide forever. This is the greatest triumph.
[9:90] The Arabs made up excuses and came to you seeking permission to stay behind. This is indicative of their rejection of God and His guidance - they stay behind. Indeed, those who disbelieve among them have incurred a painful retribution.[366]
[9:91] Not to be blamed are those who are weak, ill or are unable through no fault of their own to spend anything so long as they remain among those who uphold God's guidance. The righteous such as these among them shall not be blamed. God is the Protector and the Most Merciful.

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[365] **Are supplications** and sympathy for mushrikeen permitted? See verses 9:80-84; 9:113.
[366] **Arabs** were at one time a Semitic group but these days are a pan-ethnic people with diverse origins and ancestry. The verse in this Sura refers to Arabs in general although some may contend it refers only to the desert (Bedouin) Arabs of Arabia in the period the Quran was revealed. This however is wrong as verse 33.20 shows that when Bedouin Arabs are mentioned it is made clear. See verses 9:97-99; 9:101; 9:120; 33:20; 48:11 48:16; 49:14. See also 33:20.

[9:92] Also excused are those who come to you wishing to be included with you but you tell them, "I do not have anything as your transport." They then turn back anguished and genuinely saddened that they could not afford to contribute.

THE HYPOCRITES EXPOSED IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY

[9:93] The blame is on those who ask your permission to stay behind even though they have no excuse. They have chosen to be with the hopeless. Consequently, their hearts are sealed according to God's ordinance, and thus they do not attain any knowledge.

[9:94] When you return to them, they express regret. Say: "Do not act contrite. We no longer trust you. God has informed us about you." God will see your works and so will the messenger, then you will be returned to the knower of all secrets and declarations, He will then inform you of everything you have done.[367]

[9:95] They will swear by God, making excuses, that you may disregard their actions. Pay no attention to them. They are polluted and their end is a fiery hell of their own making, a punishment they have earned for their evil works.

[9:96] They swear to you, that you may excuse them. Even if you excuse them, God does not exonerate such wicked people.

THE ARABS: HYPOCRITES AND BELIEVERS

[9:97] The impure Arabs are the staunchest in disbelief and hypocrisy and more likely to be ignorant of the limits of this guidance as revealed to God's messenger. God is aware of all things, Most Wise.[368]

[9:98] Some Arabs consider their spending in the cause of God to be a loss and even wait in anticipation that a disaster may strike you. It is they who will incur the worst catastrophes. God is Hearer, aware of all things.

[9:99] Other Arabs do believe in God and the Last Day, and consider their spending to be a means towards God and securing their commitment to support the messenger. Indeed, it will bring them nearer. God will admit them into His mercy. God is Protector, Most Merciful.

[9:100] As for the early vanguards who faced the challenges, and the supporters who gave them refuge and those who followed them in good works, God approves of them and they are content with Him. He has

[367] **God informs** through the Quran how to recognise those who are up to no good. There are verses that show how such people behave and how they should be responded to. See verses 3:167; 6:113; 8:5; 9:64-67.

[368] **Hypocrite**. (Arabic: *munafiq*. Root N'F'Q). The *munafiq* hold back in everything except that which is in their self-interest. Arabs are specifically noted as hypocrites (verses 9:97 & 9:101) but there are also believers among them (9:99). The Jews have similarly been described in the Quran: mostly wicked and some as sincere believers. See verses 5:41; 5:82.

prepared for them gardens watered with flowing streams, wherein they abide forever. This is the greatest triumph.[369]
[9:101] Among the Arabs around you and the city dwellers, there are hypocrites, and they are staunch in their hypocrisy. You do not know them, but God knows them. We will double the retribution for them, then they end up committed to a terrible retribution.
[9:102] There are others who have acknowledged their faults: they mixed good deeds with bad deeds. God will redeem them for God is the Protector and the Most Merciful.[370]
[9:103] Take from them their sincere offerings. It purifies them and sanctifies them. And keep your commitments to them, for upholding your commitments reassures them.[371] God is Hearer, aware of all things.
[9:104] Do they not realise that God accepts the repentance of His servants and accepts their sincere contributions and that God is the Redeemer, Most Merciful?
[9:105] Say: "Work righteousness. God will see your work and so will His messenger and the believers. Ultimately, you will be returned to the knower of all secrets and declarations then He will inform you of everything you used to do."
[9:106] Others are waiting for God's decision. He may punish them or He may redeem them. God is aware of all things, Most Wise.

THE SANCTIONED SUBMISSIONS

[9:107] There are those who simulated their submissions yet their actual disbelief was detrimental. It created dissent among those who believed while providing comfort to those who opposed God and His messenger. They solemnly swore: "Our intentions are honourable." God bears witness that they are liars.
[9:108] You shall never participate in such pretentious submissions. Indeed submissions to this guidance that are established and safeguarded from the first day on the basis of truth are far more worthy of your involvement. Associating with trustworthy submissions are people who love to be pure. God cares for those who are not blemished by corruption.[372]

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[369] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test. (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). See verse and footnote: 2:76.
[370] **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*). Verses 9:102-3. Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. See verse 2:43 and footnote.
[371] **Commitments** (Arabic: *solaa*) of the messenger. The messenger is commanded to keep his commitments. This is exemplary of his character and shows him to be an excellent role model. Choose heroes to empower you or you will have heroes to enslave you. See footnote to verse 2:3.
[372] **The original** word (Arabic: masjidun. Root S'J'D) refers to 'submissions' which are the submissions of this guidance by people who purify themselves from the corruptions in their life.

[9:109] Is the one who safeguards his foundation on the basis of accountability to God and gains His approval better, or the one who props his deeds like a sandcastle on the brink of a crumbling cliff that falls down with him into the fire of hell? God does not guide the transgressing people.
[9:110] The acts of submissions that they established will always remain a source of doubt in their hearts, even until their hearts stop beating. God is aware of all things, Most Wise.

THE CONTRACT BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

[9:111] God has bought from the believers their lives and their wealth in exchange for a life of lasting serenity. Thus, they fight in the cause of God, willing to kill and get killed. Such is His truthful pledge in the Taurah, the Injeel and the Quran - and who fulfils His pledge better than God? You shall rejoice in making such an exchange. This is the greatest triumph.[373]

THE SINCERE ACCEPT THIS GUIDANCE

[9:112] The believers in this guidance are those who repent. They are the ones who serve God. Their deeds glorify God. They are humble and concede most readily to His guidance. They advocate good works and forbid all things evil and they keep within the limits imposed by God. Give good news to such believers in whose hearts there is integrity and conviction.[374]

ABRAHAM'S CONFLICT WITH HIS FATHER

[9:113] It is not acceptable for the messenger nor those who believe to ask protection for the mushrikeen: those who set up authorities to equal God,

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[373] **The believers,** the mu'min, do not fear death when fighting in the cause of God to instate and maintain order. They willingly risk their lives to ward off insurrection, tyranny, corruption and all criminal activity to replace fear and turmoil with peace and security. See verse and footnote 3:158; Aggression is forbidden. See verses and footnotes 2:190-194; 4:74-78; 5:87; 7:33.

[374] **Believers** are those who not only profess to accept this guidance from God, but actively implement it completely and fully in their lives. They do this first by repenting. What is repentance? Repentance takes place when regressive actions are replaced by virtuous deeds, only good works nullify the bad works. When a person has strayed off the balanced path and realises it, reappraises the situation and moves forward in the right direction, this is repentance. Contrition just before death is of no value because the Self develops through good deeds and death may take away the time needed for the reparation period. Furthermore, repentance is not a passive act of regret. Repentance means not to succumb to unrestrained grief, but to resolutely hasten back to the starting point and choose the correct path. The individual who has realised his mistake should be eager to rectify it and repair the damage done. Repentance, therefore, is positive effort at restoration of the lost position. See verses 2:152; 10:90; 66:8; **Repentance:** See verse 66:8; 68:32 and also verses 3:89-90; 4:17; 4:146; 5:34; 5:39; 5:74; 6:54; 7:143; 7;153; 9:3-5, 9:11; 9:74; 9:104; 9:112; 9:118; 9:126; 11:3; 11:52; 11:61; 11:90; 11:112; 16;119; 17:25; 19:60; 20:82 24:5; 24:31; 25:70-71; 28:67; 37:143. **Why** do bad things happen to good people? See verses and footnotes 8:25; 66:8.

even if they were their nearest of kin once they realise that they have fallen for a life leading to hell.[375]
[9:114] The only reason Abraham asked protection for his father was that he had promised him to do so. But as soon as he realised that he was an enemy of God, Abraham disowned his father. Abraham was extremely benevolent and just.
[9:115] God's ordinance gives freedom for people to go astray but only after He has guided them and made clear to them the consequences. God is fully aware of all things.
[9:116] To God belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He gives life and causes death according to His ordinance. You have none beside God as a sustainer and protector.
[9:117] God has redeemed the messenger and those who took up the challenge and the supporters who hosted them and gave them refuge and those who followed him during the difficult times. That is when the hearts of some of them almost wavered. But He has redeemed them, for He is compassionate towards them and Most Merciful.
[9:118] Also redeemed were the three who stayed behind. The spacious earth became so constricted for them that they almost gave up all hope for themselves. Finally, they realised that there was no escape from God, except to Him. He then redeemed them that they may repent. God is the Redeemer, Most Merciful.
[9:119] O you who believe in this guidance, remember you are accountable to God and be among those who are true.
[9:120] Neither the dwellers of the town nor the Arabs around them shall seek to stay behind the messenger of God when he mobilises for war. Nor shall they give priority to their own affairs over supporting him. This is because they have not yet suffered any thirst or any effort or hunger in the cause of God or taken a single step that enrages the disbelievers or inflicted any hardship upon the enemy without having it recorded as a credit. God never fails to recompense those who work righteousness.[376]
[9:121] Nor do they spend any sum, small or large, nor do they cross any valley in the cause of God, without having the credit recorded in their favour. God will surely reward them generously for their works.

STUDY AND TEACH QURANIC VALUES

[9:122] When the believers mobilize for war, not all of them shall do so. A few from each group shall remain to devote their time to study this

[375] **Mushrikeen:** (*mushrik.* sing.) Traitors. Those who commit treachery and set up or accept any authority to rival or rank with God. See verses and footnote 9:4. As this verse clearly shows, supplications and sympathy for disbelievers is not permitted. See verses 9:3-12; 9:80-84 and 5:54; 9:73; 9:122; 48:29. **What is repentance?** See verses 9:112; 68:32.
[376] **Arabs** are mentioned specifically in the Quran. See verses and footnotes 9:90.

guidance of the Deen-Islam, the System for social reform. Thus, they can reflect, plan, implement and teach this knowledge to other people, including those who return, and that they all may remain well informed.
[9:123] O you who believe, you shall fight the disbelievers who attack you and let them find you stern and know that God is with the righteous.
[9:124] When a verse was revealed some of them said, "Did this verse strengthen the conviction of anyone among you?" Indeed, it does strengthen the belief of those who believe and they rejoice in this guidance.
[9:125] As for those who harbour doubts in their hearts, it actually adds wickedness to their disbelief and they die as disbelievers.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS ON EVERYONE'S DOOR

[9:126] Do they not see that once or twice they suffer from exacting trials every year? Yet, they consistently fail to repent and fail to take heed?
[9:127] Whenever a verse is revealed, some of them look at each other as if to say: "Does anyone see you?" before they quickly creep away. Thus, their hearts are diverted according to God's ordinance for they are people who do not understand.[377]
[9:128] A messenger has come to you from among you, who is careful not to impose any hardship on you and cares about you and is tolerant and merciful towards the believers.
[9:129] If they turn away, then say "God is sufficient for me, there is no authority to rank with Him. I trust in Him and He is the Sustainer of the all the Universe. [378]

[377] **Trials:** The two verses [9:126-127] state that people are given frequent opportunities in their lives, but as the saying goes, once in a while everyone gets knocked down by the truth, but most people get up, dust themselves and walk on as if nothing had ever happened. **Repentance:** what is it? See verses and footnotes 9:112; 68:32.

[378] **Permanent Values** The Quran gives Absolute Laws and Permanent Values for all aspects of life. Since its revelation, there has been no change in it, and millions of people memorising it have ensured its preservation verbatim. The Quran is in fact, the moral compass for leading a virtuous life for the welfare and progress of humankind. Living such a life is important because it develops the Self, the human spirit or personality, making it fit for the next stage in evolution: the life yet to come. While religions and other lifestyles may include some positive moral aspects for a social order, the Deen-Islam is underpinned by ultimate accountability to the One God. This makes Deen-Islam the perfect system, over and above any other, for those who are concerned for the progress and welfare of individuals and society as a whole. These are the ones who want to protect themselves from lasting harm and are the true benefactors of humanity.

Why does a person have to do good or be munificent? In all religions and secular systems there are common ethical values that encourage people to do good. However, it is only good deeds based on Permanent Values and underpinned by accountability that develop the Self. **All religions** are shaped by susceptibilities and prejudices of individuals, their values change with time. While people can append innovations and fabricated doctrines to Quranic values, laws and decrees, they can never be part of Deen-Islam. Just as importantly, it is always possible to check back with the Quran, the original unchanged text, whereas with other systems it may not be feasible.

Sura 10: Jonah (Younas)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[10:1] A.L.R. These are the signs of this guidance, a book of knowledge and insight.
[10:2] Is it such a wonder for people that We inspired a man like them? He was commanded to warn people and give good news to those who believe that they have attained a position of prominence at their Sustainer. The disbelievers claimed, "This is a clever magician."
[10:3] Your only Sustainer is God. The One who created the heavens and the earth in six periods then assumed all authority. He creates and directs all matters and is in control of all things. There is no intercession except in accordance with His ordinance. Such is God, the one who sustains you. You shall serve Him. Will you not then heed this guidance?
[10:4] To Him is your ultimate return, for all of you. This is God's truthful promise. He initiates the creation then repeats it, in order to reward those who believe and lead a life of good work without bias and unfairness. As for those who disbelieve in this guidance, they are as if quenching their thirst with caustic drinks, and this is a painful punishment for disbelieving this guidance.
[10:5] He is the One who rendered the sun a resplendent star and the moon luminous and He designed its phases that you may learn to count the years, and made them calculating devices. God did not create all this, except for a specific purpose. He explains the revelations for people who observe and learn.[379]

When eating, we are careful what we put in our mouths. We don't want to eat what might harm us. If we do take something perilous, the system in our body soon tells us. But where is the mechanism that lets us know that something is harming our moral wellbeing? It is the Permanent Values that guard us from inflicting damage to our moral Self. Permanent Values, like the laws of nature, are absolute. However, we can only adopt these values by choice, there is no automated screening to prevent us from any distress that might follow should we make the wrong choice. Once a choice has been made, we have to live by the consequences.

What good is a value of any description if there is no final realisation of its worth? While different religions may have some shared moral values, those values cannot by themselves advance society or indeed develop the Self. Permanent Values given in the Quran are the framework of life within which all activities take place, within this permanence there is a built-in tolerance that gives each individual freedom of expression, the very activities that develop and strengthen the Self. Even this is not sufficient, and therefore it is underpinned by ultimate accountability to God. The complete realisation of the full potential of the Self is when each Self is rewarded for its endeavors, it is enriched by this life and looks forward to even greater adventures in the life yet to come.

[379] **Why did God** create the universe and mankind? We can't answer this question with any certainty, but we can make an intelligent deduction. The nature of the Self is to be creative and express itself. God being the supreme Self does so not only by creating, but by creating the ultimate creation: a free willed being. **Intelligent design:** see verses 7:201; 68:52.

[10:6] Surely, in the alternation of the night and the day and all things God has created in the heavens and the earth there are signs for people who seek the truth.[380]

[10:7] Those who are not expecting to meet God and are preoccupied with this worldly life and are content with it and continue to neglect these revelations,
[10:8] they have damaged their Self and are surrounding themselves with an inferno, as a consequence of their own works.
[10:9] As for those who believe and do good things, their Sustainer guides them by virtue of their belief. They have earned coolness of character and harmony for the life yet to come.[381]

THE MAJORITY CHASE WEALTH

[10:10] Their supplications will be: "Be You glorified, our God," they will be welcomed with the greeting of, "Salamun: Peace,"[382] and their ultimate words of appreciation will be: "Praise be to God, Sustainer of the universe."
[10:11] If God hastened the retribution incurred by the majority the way they hasten to collect wealth, provisions and property, they would have been obliterated long ago. However, We leave those who do not believe in meeting Us, in their transgressions, blundering.
[10:12] When difficult conditions touch a human being, he implores Us while lying down, sitting or standing. But as soon as We relieve his pain he goes on as if he never implored Us to relieve any hardship. The works of the transgressors are thus embellished in their eyes.[383]

[10:13] Many a generation We have annihilated before you when they went beyond transgressing. The messengers went to them with clear guidance but they refused to believe. We thus punish the guilty people.
[10:14] Then We made you successors on earth after them, to allow you to do what you will.

THE MESSENGER FOLLOWED THE QURAN ALONE

[10:15] When Our guidance is conveyed to them, those who do not expect to meet Us say, "Give to us some guidance other than this Quran or change

[380] **Everything** in the universe works in a precise and ordered way. In these things, for people who study them, there is evidence of intelligent design, the implicit trademark of God's creations. See verses and footnotes 41:53; 54:49.
[381] **Once individuals ignite their light** to seek the truth, through God's ordinance they attract those things that exalt them in character and makes them fit for the life yet to come.
[382] **Peace:** (Arabic: *salamun*). Greeting approved by God. See verse and footnote 6:54.
[383] **When in need** some people implore God but forget His deen when the pain is gone. See verses and footnotes 10:22-23; 29:65; 31:32.

it." Say: "I cannot possibly change it of my own accord. I simply follow what is revealed to me. I fear, if I disobey my Sustainer, the retribution of an awesome day."[384]
[10:16] Say: "Had God wanted, I would not have disclosed this to you and you would have known nothing about it. All my life I have lived among you and you have known me as a truthful person. Do you not understand?"
[10:17] Who is more wicked than the one who invents lies about God or rejects His guidance. Certainly the transgressors never succeed.
[10:18] They serve beside God those who possess no power to harm them or benefit them and they say, "These are our intercessors at God" Say: "Are you informing God of something He does not know in the heavens or the earth?" Be He glorified. He is the Most High, far above any authority that you set up to equal Him.[385]
[10:19] All the people used to be one community before they disputed and fragmented into sects. If it were not for God's predetermined decision to withhold judgement a verdict would have been given immediately regarding their disputes.
[10:20] They say, "How come no miracle came down to him from the One who sustains him?" Say: "The future belongs to God, so wait and see the consequences of your deeds and I will wait along with you."[386]

PEOPLE BECOME ARDENT ANTAGONISTS

[10:21] When We bestow mercy[387] upon communities after adversity has afflicted them, they attempt to undermine this guidance. Say: "God's ordinance is far more effective. Our messengers[388] are recording everything you scheme."
[10:22] You cross the land and the sea consistent with His ordinance. You board your ships and they sail smoothly in favourable winds. Then you rejoice. When violent storms blow and the waves surround you from every side, this is when you sincerely implore God, devoting your invocations to

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[384] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). This is a crucial message to those who seek guidance in books other than the Quran. People have always wanted to have something different to follow and the religious sects have succeeded in diverting people to follow various saints, imams and books written by them rather than the Quran. See verses 2:185; 17:73; 46:9; 68:37.
[385] **Intercession** is undeserved favouritism. See verse and footnote 2:254.
[386] **People** are looking for magic, miracles or a saviour to cure their ills and sort out their lives. Advances in science and technology shows that 'miracles' are happening all around us. A society based on the System found in this guidance is a 'miracle' formula for a successful social order. There is no magic or miracles that suspend God's law for any individual's benefit - everything happens according to God's ordinance and consequently by human endeavour. See verses 17:89-96.
[387] **God's 'mercy'** provides circumstances for restoring a bad state of affairs to its original condition before any damage was done. However, in times of disaster, corrupt individuals are at the forefront in manipulating the situation for profit.
[388] **Messengers** that record are malaika, not human messengers.

Him alone: "If You only save us this time, We will be eternally appreciative of Your Deen."[389]
[10:23] But as soon as He saves you, you transgress in the world. O mankind, your transgression is only to the detriment of your own Self. You remain attracted to this life, but remember to Us is your ultimate return, then We inform you of everything you have done.[390]

AN EXAMPLE OF RETRIBUTION

[10:24] The analogy of this worldly life is like the water We send down from the sky to produce all kinds of plants from the earth and to provide food for all the people and the animals. Then just as their land is flourishing and people think that they are in control, severe weather by day or night, consistent with God's ordinance, leaves the land completely barren as if nothing existed the previous day. We thus explain and make clear for people who reflect.
[10:25] God invites to a life of peace and guides in accordance with His ordinance, in a straight and balanced path.
[10:26] For those who do good, the reward will be multiplied manifold. They will never experience any deprivation or shame. These are the ones who will live in harmony, they will abide there forever.
[10:27] As for those who earned through wicked deeds, their punishment is equivalent to the wrongs they do. Humiliation is what they deserve and no one beside God can protect them. Their faces will seem as if overwhelmed by masses of darkness. They will live a life of turmoil, they abide therein forever.

LEADERS DISOWN THEIR FOLLOWERS

[10:28] On the day when We summon them all, We will say to those who served other than God, "We have summoned you, together with those whom you set up as authorities to equal God." We will have them face each other and their leaders will say to them, "We had no idea that you followed us.[391]
[10:29] "God suffices as a witness between us and you that we were completely unaware of your worshipping us."

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[389] **In suffering** most people are ready to implore God to save them and that they will follow His Deen: the System of Islam. But when the pain is gone, they turn their backs and implement only that which benefits their own selfish desires. See verses and footnotes 10:12; 29:65; 31:32.
[390] **When in trouble** people implore God, but when the pain is gone they are absorbed with their own lives and oblivious to this guidance. But to God they return and will answer to Him.
[391] **Accepting authorities** to rank with God is a gross offence. This could be someone religious, political or some other individual such as a saint or perhaps even worshipping and kissing a stone as reverence or taking an amulet or rabbit's foot as a lucky charm. Some of these people or things will not even be aware that you are 'worshipping' them, following their edicts or are simply influenced by them to act in conflict with the Permanent Values. See verses and footnotes 12:106; 39:3.

[10:30] That is when each Self will examine everything it had done. They will be returned to God, their Sustainer and Protector and those they fabricated as rivals to God will now disown them.

THE MAJORITY ASTRAY WHILE BELIEVING THEY ARE NOT

[10:31] Say: "Who provides for you from the heaven and the earth? Who controls both your hearing and your sight? Who produces the living from the dead and the dead from the living? Who is in control of all things?" They say, "God." Say: "Why then do you not keep your duty to Him and follow this guidance?"[392]

[10:32] Such is God, the One who sustains you. What is there after the truth except falsehood? How could you disregard all this guidance?

[10:33] This is what your Sustainer's ordinance does to those who choose to be wicked: they become impervious and cannot believe.[393]

[10:34] Say: "Can any of those who you set up authorities to equal God initiate creation then repeat it?" Say: "God initiates the creation then repeats it. How then could you deviate?"

[10:35] Say: "Do any of those whom you set up to equal God guide you to the truth?" Say: "God guides to the truth. Is the one who guides to the truth more worthy of being followed or one who does not guide and needs guidance for himself? What is wrong with your judgment?"

[10:36] Most of them follow nothing but opinions, and conjecture is no substitute for the truth. God is fully aware of everything they do.[394]

THE QURAN: DETAILED GUIDANCE FROM GOD

[10:37] This Quran could not possibly be authored by any other than God. It confirms the truth previously revealed in this fully detailed book, a reliable guidance for all that is decreed for you, from the One who sustains the universe.[395]

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[392] **The majority of people** profess to believe in God, when in fact their actions prove the opposite. They apply doctrines and fabricated laws from books other than the Quran, ignoring the laws and decrees of God. They are in fact *mushriq*, traitors: those who take authorities other than God, and while rejecting the Quran, they insist they have not done so. See verses: 10:34; 13:16; 23:87; 23:87, 89; 29:61; 29:63; 31:25; 39:38; 43:87; 13:16; 23:87; 23:89; 29:61; 29:63; 31:25; 39:38; 43:87. See also 12:106; 25:30. God alone 40:12; 40:80.

[393] **Each time** a person does something wrong, he moves further away from guidance until he no longer hears the call to do good. See verse and footnote 6:25.

[394] **The majority of people** support their beliefs not with knowledge but hearsay. See verse 38:26.

[395] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). Are you following imams (from the past or living ones from the present) or do you follow God's guidance? This Quran may not have the things that people desire but it is a detailed book of guidance for the true welfare of all individuals and societies. This guidance does not pander to the whims and wishes of people. See verses and footnotes 2:185; 7:203; 17:73-77. **Quran protected** 56:77-18; preserved 85:21-22. falsehood cannot enter it 41:42.

[10:38] If they say, "He fabricated it." Say: "Then produce one verse like these and invite as witnesses whomever you wish, other than God, if you are truthful."[396]
[10:39] Indeed, they have rejected this without even studying and examining it and before understanding it. Thus did those before them disbelieve. Therefore, note the consequences for those who create turmoil.

EACH PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS OWN WORKS

[10:40] Some people believe in this guidance while others disbelieve in it. The One who sustains you is fully aware of those who are corrupt.
[10:41] If they reject this guidance, then say: "I have my works and you have your works. You are not part of anything I do and I am blameless of anything you do."
[10:42] Some of them listen to you, but there are those who turn a deaf ear, how can they understand?
[10:43] Some of them look at you, but can you guide those who turn a blind eye, how can they see?
[10:44] God never wrongs any people. It is the people who wrong their own Self.

[10:45] On the day when He summons them all, they recognise each other and it seems as if they lasted in this world only an hour. Losers indeed are those who disbelieved in their reckoning with God and chose the fantasy of this world rather than the truth.
[10:46] Whether We show you some of the retribution We promise them or terminate your life before that, to Us is their ultimate return. God witnesses everything you do.
[10:47] To each community a messenger is sent. After each messenger brings guidance, they are judged equitably without the least injustice.

MESSENGER ONLY A HUMAN BEING

[10:48] They challenge: "When will this promise be fulfilled, if you are telling the truth?"
[10:49] Say: "I possess no power to harm myself or benefit myself, everything that takes place is consistent with God's ordinance." Each community has a life span determined by their deeds, in accordance with God's ordinance. Once their outcome is established, they cannot delay it nor advance it.[397]

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[396] **A challenge** from God. See verse and footnote 11:13.

[397] **The Lifespan** of an individual or a community is determined by their 'free will' actions. Scientists have now discovered that the field of epigenetics shows how choices and environment influences not only your genetic code but also that of your children. **Free will** means freedom of choice, but once the choice is made there is no control of the consequences of that choice.

[10:50] Say: "His retribution comes to you by night or by day, why are the transgressors in such a hurry?
[10:51] "If it does happen now, will you then believe? Why should you believe, even then? Even though you beckoned it to come?"
[10:52] It will be said to those who caused turmoil, "Taste the eternal retribution. Are you not punished precisely for what you have earned?"
[10:53] They challenge you to fulfil this promise: "Is this really what will happen?" Say: "Yes indeed, by the One who sustains me, this is the truth and you can never escape."
[10:54] If any corrupt individual possessed everything on earth, he would readily offer it as a ransom. They will be ridden with remorse when they see the retribution. And they will be judged equitably without the least injustice.
[10:55] Absolutely to God belongs everything in the heavens and the earth. Absolutely, God's promise is truth but most of them do not grasp this awesome reality.
[10:56] He controls life and death and to Him you will be returned.

QURAN: A HEALING FOR MANKIND

[10:57] O people, enlightenment has come to you in this guidance from the One who sustains you to provide justice for anything that troubles your hearts and good counsel and a mercy for those who believe.[398]
[10:58] Say: "With God's benevolence and with His mercy the believers shall rejoice." This is far better than any wealth they can accumulate.

INNOVATED PROHIBITIONS CONDEMNED

[10:59] Say: "Do you note how God sends down to you all kinds of provisions, then you render some of them unlawful and some lawful?" Say: "Did God give you permission to do this? Or, do you fabricate lies and attribute them to God?"[399]
[10:60] Does it ever occur to those who fabricate lies about God that they will have to face Him on the Day of Resurrection? Certainly, God showers all the people with His grace but most of them are unappreciative.
[10:61] You do not do anything nor do you recite any part of the Quran, without God being witness to it as it takes place. Not even an atom's weight

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Positive choices and a good environment opens opportunities to progress people and communities, this helps each Self develop and become fit for the life yet to come.

[398] **People** are looking for solutions for all kinds of problems in their lives. A society based on the System of harmony found in this guidance is a formula for a successful social order that covers all principles of laws and values that a society needs.

[399] **Only** restrictions given in the Quran should be followed, whether it's food, clothing and other things. Those made by religious leaders and authorities other than God must be rejected. Don't forbid what God has not. See verses and footnotes 16:115.

is out of your Sustainer's control be it in the heavens or the earth. Nor is there anything smaller than an atom or greater that is not documented in a profound record.
[10:62] Absolutely, those close to God have nothing to fear nor will they grieve.
[10:63] They are those who believe in this guidance and lead a life of good works according to it.
[10:64] For them enjoyment and happiness is in this world as well as in the life yet to come. This is God's unchangeable law. Such is the greatest achievement.[400]
[10:65] Do not be saddened by what the disbelievers say. All power belongs to God. He is the Hearer and is aware of all things.
[10:66] Absolutely to God belongs everyone in the heavens and everyone on earth. Those who set up authorities to equal God are really following nothing of substance. They only think that they are following something good and they only guess.
[10:67] He is the One who rendered the night for your rest and rendered the daylight for you. In these signs are manifestations for people who understand.[401]

GOD DOES NOT PROCREATE

[10:68] They said, "God has begotten a son." Be He glorified. He is Self-sufficient. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth. You have no proof to support such a blasphemy. Are you saying about God what you do not know?
[10:69] Proclaim: "Those who fabricate lies about God will never succeed."
[10:70] They get their temporary share in this world then to Us is their ultimate return and We commit them to severe retribution for disbelieving this guidance.

HISTORY OF NOAH

[10:71] Recite for them the history of Noah. He said to his people, "O my people, if you find my position and my reminding you of God's guidance too much for you then I put my trust in God. You should get together with your leaders to agree on a final decision among yourselves then let me know without delay if will follow me.

[400] **Those who** live by this guidance have Permanent Values, the unchangeable principles of life. Such individuals and communities will have strength of character to make their societies progress and prosper by creating a harmonious environment that has enduring qualities.
[401] **People with** perception can see the signs and discover evidence that others cannot. A knowledgeable and intelligent person can also see the value of this guidance.

[10:72] "If you turn away then I have not asked you for any recompense. My reward comes from God. I have been commanded to submit to His guidance."
[10:73] They rejected him and consequently We saved him and those who joined him in the watercraft. We made them the inheritors. And We drowned those who rejected Our guidance. Note the consequences: you have been warned.
[10:74] Then We sent after him messengers to their people and they showed them clear guidance. But they were not to believe in what they had rejected in the past. The hearts of the corrupt are thus sealed, consistent with God's ordinance.

MOSES AND AARON GO TO FIRAWN

[10:75] Then We sent after them Moses and Aaron to Firawn and his community with Our clear guidance. But they turned arrogant and were a corrupt people.
[10:76] When the truth came to them from Us, they said, "They are obviously trying to enchant us".
[10:77] Moses said, "Is this how you describe the truth when it comes to you? Is this sorcery? How can any magicians prevail?"
[10:78] They said, "Did you come to divert us from what We found our parents doing and to attain positions of prominence for yourselves? We will never join you as believers of what you bring."

FALSEHOOD CRUSHED

[10:79] Firawn said, "Bring to me every skilled magician."
[10:80] When the magicians came, Moses said to them, "Do whatever you are going to do."
[10:81] When they threw something on the ground, Moses said, "What you have produced is an illusion and God will make it fail. God does not support the work of those who are corrupt."

THOSE WHO BELIEVE TRUST IN GOD

[10:82] God establishes the truth with His words despite the efforts of the corrupt.
[10:83] None believed Moses except a few of his people while fearing the tyranny of Firawn and his priests. Surely, Firawn was an arrogant being on earth and a real oppressor of people.
[10:84] Moses said, "O my people, if you have really believed in God then put your trust in Him, if you really submit to His guidance."
[10:85] They said, "We trust in God, the One who sustains us, save us from the persecution of these oppressive people.
[10:86] "Deliver us with Your mercy from the disbelieving people."

[10:87] We inspired Moses and his brother. "Secure your homes in your misr[402] for the time being and focus on and uphold your commitments.[403] Give good news to the believers of His guidance."
[10:88] Moses said, "Our Sustainer, you have given Firawn and his elders luxuries and wealth in this world. Our Sustainer, they only use them to repulse others from Your path. Our God, wipe out their wealth and implement your ordinance to deflect their hearts to prevent them from believing until they see the painful retribution."
[10:89] He said, "Your appeal has been answered so be steadfast and do not follow the ways of those who reject any sense to accept My guidance."

CONTRITION BEFORE A DEATH: A USELESS PLEA

[10:90] We delivered the Children of Israel across the water. Firawn and his troops pursued them aggressively and wickedly. When drowning became a reality for him, he said, "I believe that there is no authority to rank with the One God, in whom the Children of Israel have believed, I submit to Him alone."
[10:91] It is now too late! For you have rebelled already and chose to be corrupt.
[10:92] Today We will preserve your body to set you up as a lesson for future generations. Unfortunately many people are totally oblivious to Our signs.[404]

[10:93] We have endowed the Children of Israel with a position of honour and blessed them with good provisions. Yet they disputed when this knowledge came to them. Your Sustainer will judge them on the Day of Resurrection regarding everything they disputed.

[10:94] If you have any doubt regarding what is revealed to you from God, the One who sustains you, then ask those who have read the previous scripture. Indeed, the truth has come to you from your Sustainer. Do not be with those who doubt.
[10:95] Nor shall you join those who rejected God's guidance, lest you be with the losers.
[10:96] Surely, those who attract condemnation, consistent with the ordinance from the One who sustains you, cannot believe.

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[402] **Misr:** a secure trade station of which there were many. However, this bears no geographical location to Qubt or Egypt, as it is known today. Firawn's Misr, unlike Egypt, had many rivers as mentioned in Sura 43:51. See verse and footnote 2:61. Focus. (Arabic: *qibla*). See verse 2:147.
[403] **Commitments** (Arabic: *solaa*) of Moses and Aaron, his brother. See footnote to verse 2:3.
[404] **Invocation,** contrition or remorse just before death is of no value because the Self develops through good acts and spending for the good of society, the time for which at this stage is lost. Like an antidote, good deeds need time to take effect and likewise repentance while dying is of no practical benefit. See verses and footnote 36:68-69. Repentance see verse 9:112.

[10:97] No matter what kind of proof you show them, they will not believe, until they see the painful retribution.

NATIONS PROSPER WHEN FOLLOWING GOD'S GUIDANCE

[10:98] Any community that believes and implements this guidance will surely be rewarded. For example the people of Jonah, when they followed Our guidance found relief from their humiliating tribulation they had been suffering in this world and We made them prosperous.

[10:99] Had your Sustainer willed, all the people on earth would have believed in His guidance. Do you want to force all the people to become believers?[405]

[10:100] No person can believe and attain success except in a way consistent with God's ordinance. Those who refuse and defy their common sense, devalue themselves and are heading towards a course of destruction.[406]

[10:101] Say: "Look at all the signs in the heavens and the earth." All the proofs and all the warnings can never help people who have decided not to believe.

[10:102] Can they expect consequences other than those of previous generations who refused to believe in God's guidance? Say: "Just wait for the retribution and along with you, I will also wait."

[10:103] We ultimately give prosperity to Our messengers and those who believe in My guidance. It is Our immutable law that those who believe and implement Our guidance are successful.

[10:104] Say: "O people, if you have any doubt regarding this Deen-Islam, God's Social Order, I do not serve those you serve to rank with God. I serve God: the One who will terminate our lives. I am commanded to believe in this guidance."

[10:105] I was commanded: "Keep yourself devoted to this Deen, the social order prescribed by God and not to set up any authority to equal God.

[10:106] "You shall not serve beside God those who possesses no power to ultimately benefit you or harm you. If you do, you will be one of those who are corrupt."

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[405] **For an individual** to develop, it is essential to go through the proper process, to become physically fit you must exercise and to become a Self with integrity you need to do good work. But this must be through voluntary acceptance - there is no value in forced belief.

[406] **There is no shortcut** to Self development. The process to accept guidance and implement it, and the progress depends on your level of your activity in applying the guidance and also you have to choose this of your own free will, there is no value in being compelled to accept it. See verses 3:142; 6:42; 6:128; 9:85; 21:111; 30:44; 32:12; 90:10-20; 94:3-8. See also verse 3:85.

[10:107] If God touches you with a hardship, none can relieve it except He. And when He gives you in abundance, no force can prevent His grace. He bestows it upon whomever He chooses from among His servants. He is the Protector, Most Merciful.

[10:108] Proclaim: "O people, the truth has come to you in this guidance from the One who sustains you. Whoever is guided is guided for his own good. And whoever goes astray, goes astray to his own detriment. I am not a guardian over you."

[10:109] Follow what is revealed to you and be patient until God issues His judgment. He is the best of evaluators.[407]

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[407] **Equity and Equality** - what is the distinction? Although the terms equality and equity are often used interchangeably, this can lead to some confusion because while these concepts are related, there are also important distinctions between them. **Equity** involves giving people *what they need* to enjoy a happy and full life. **Equality** by contrast, aims to ensure that everyone *gets the same things* in order to enjoy the same standard of a full and healthy life. The aim of equality is to promote fairness and justice, but it can only work if everyone starts from *the same place* and needs *the same things*. To show how the distinction between equity and equality we can look at the health care system in the United Kingdom which is based on the concept of equality. It is designed to ensure that everyone has the same access to health care services regardless of their ability to pay for the health services they receive. On the face of it this seems fair. But it is limited in promoting a fair and just service because it ignores other important factors – such as language, place of residence, age and sex of the individuals – that can also act as barriers to receiving proper care. At the same time, ensuring the same access to care for everyone assumes that everyone has similar health issues and similar health care needs. This is not always the case. Many people live with social, political and economic disadvantages that contribute to poor health. For example, people who live in poverty frequently have more health issues than those with more money. As a result, they may need additional or special services rather than just the standard ones, to counter, for example, the force of substandard housing, limited access to fresh, nutritious foods, and exposure to unsafe environments. **Equity** means to make sure that they have *what they need* to achieve and maintain good health and well-being. Once everyone enjoys a similar level of health and well-being, the focus can then be placed on preserving fairness by giving everyone *the same things*: this is *equality*. **Equality** is the outcome, equity is levelling the field so that equality can be achieved. In the Quran this concept is known as *ehsan*. This mean to balance society and close the gaps created by any disparity caused by *zulm*, the displacement of values. This ultimately results in peace and security. To achieve equity, it is sometimes necessary for self-sacrifice and the fulfilment of a duty: to give up a want or a desire for the greater good. See verse and footnote 2:228.

Are men and women equal? The Quran makes a true and proper distinction between the differences among men and women and takes into account their needs, rights and responsibilities within the constructs of a fair and just society. Their unique roles are natural and inherent, but the outcome of their belief and actions, determined by the Law of Requital, is equality that is strengthened with equity: fairness and justice. Understanding the differences between equity and equality therefore helps us to recognize and accept the differences in not only the sexes, but also among people in general. More importantly it can guide us to do something about the situation and improve it. See verses and footnotes 4:34; 6:132; 16: 97; 33:35.

Equality is sameness - everyone getting the same thing, and **equity** is fairness - ensuring everyone not only gets the same opportunities but the same rewards for the same work or deeds. True equality is the result of true equity. See verses and footnotes 6:132; 21:112; 27:11; 65:11.

Sura 11: Hood (Hud)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[11:1] A.L.R. This is a law-giving book with verses perfected and elucidated. It comes from the One who is Most Wise, fully aware of all things.

THE QURAN: THE ENDURING MESSAGE OF GOD

[11:2] Proclaim: "You shall not serve any authority as equal with God. I come to you from Him as a warner as well as a bearer of good news.

[11:3] "You shall seek your Sustainer's protection then repent to Him. You will then prosper abundantly in accordance with His ordinance. Those who deserve his grace attract it in abundance. If you turn away then I fear for you the retribution of an awesome day."[408]

[11:4] To God is your ultimate return and He is All-powerful.

[11:5] Indeed, they hide their innermost thoughts, as if to keep Him from knowing them. In fact even if they cover themselves with their clothes, He knows all their secrets and declarations. He is aware of their most innermost thoughts.[409]

[11:6] There is not a creation on earth whose sustenance does not depend on God's ordinance. And He knows its course during the aeons and its final conclusion. All are recorded in a profound record.[410]

[11:7] He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six periods and His earthly domain was completely covered with water, in order to establish an environment to develop your Self and to distinguish those among you who evolve and flourish through good work. Yet when you say "We will be resurrected after death," those who disbelieve this guidance say "This is clearly witchcraft."[411]

[11:8] And if We delay the retribution they have incurred, for We reserve it for a specific period, they say, "What is keeping Him?" In fact, once it comes to them, nothing can stop it and what they scorn will come back to torment them.

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[408] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.

[409] **Disbelievers** cover themselves with clothes. See verse 71:7.

[410] **Life on earth** evolved from a unicellular organism to the numerous forms we know today. All life forms in their evolutionary history passed through different stages and God sustained them throughout all the phases and also He knows their destination. See verses 36:82; 71:17.

[411] **In the year** 1600 the Inquisition found Giordano Bruno guilty for supporting "the opinion of Copernicus that the earth did go round..." and he was burned at the stake in Rome. Now the orbit of planets is an undisputed fact. The things people don't understand are 'magic' or 'witchcraft'. Just a few hundred years ago who would have believed that it would be commonplace to transplant a heart, a kidney, or a lung. Is resurrection therefore too difficult for God?

[11:9] Whenever a human being's life flourishes and then in accordance with His ordinance it experiences restriction, he turns despondent and unappreciative.
[11:10] When prosperity follows after adversity has afflicted him, he says, "All misfortune has gone away from me." and he becomes unbridled with excitement and pride.
[11:11] As for those who are humble and steadfast in their perseverance and lead a righteous life, they deserve protection and a generous recompense.

GOD'S REVELATION IS PROFOUND AND IMPOSSIBLE TO IMITATE

[11:12] You may wish to disregard some of this guidance that is revealed to you and you may yield to what they say. Also, they may say, "How come no treasure comes down to him or an angel to support him?" However, you are only a warner, it is God who controls all things.[412]
[11:13] If they say, "He fabricated this recitation," then tell them, "Produce ten verses like these, fabricated, and invite as witnesses whomever you can, other than God, if you are truthful."[413]
[11:14] If they fail to meet your challenge then know that this is revealed with God's knowledge and that there is no authority to rank with Him. Will you then submit to this guidance?

THOSE WHO DENY THE CONTINUOUS FUTURE

[11:15] Those who pursue only this material life and its fleeting vanities, We will pay them for their works in this life without the least reduction.
[11:16] It is they who gave up their share in the life yet to come and consequently a future of turmoil is what they deserve. All their works are in vain, everything they have done is nullified.
[11:17] As for those who rely on the clear proofs from their Sustainer, reported by a witness from Him, and before it the book of Moses set the precedent of this mercy, will certainly believe in this. As for those who disbelieve among all the different groups, a painful turmoil is awaiting

[412] **To please** many the messenger may have wished for an easier set of laws. God's law is fit for purpose and not designed to satisfy the whims and inclinations of anyone. See verses and footnotes 17:73; 48:25. **Angel:** Those who have no proper knowledge believe the malaika to be female angels. People expected the messenger to have such a being with him as well as many riches. God does not follow the whims of people. However, He did send the malaika to support His messengers. See verses and footnotes 2:30; 6:8; 8:9.
[413] **This is one** of the challenges in the Quran. If you think this is a fabricated revelation, then try and produce just ten verses like the original. If the author of the Quran is telling you how to defeat Him, then He is certain that He is undefeatable. This challenge has yet to be met. Without a doubt the Quran is unique and inimitable. See verses: 2:23-24; 4:82; 10:38; 17:88.

them. Do not harbour any doubt, this is the truth from your Sustainer, but most people disbelieve.[414]
[11:18] Who is more evil than those who fabricate lies about God? They will be presented before their Sustainer and the witnesses will say: "These are the ones who lied about the One who sustains them. God's condemnation has befallen the transgressors."
[11:19] They repel others from the straight and balanced path of God and seek to make it crooked and they are disbelievers in the life yet to come.

NO PROTECTION FOR THE DISBELIEVERS

[11:20] They will never escape nor will they find anyone as their Sustainer or protector to help them against God. Retribution will be intensified for them. They failed to hear the truth and they failed to see the benefits of this guidance.
[11:21] These are the ones who lost their Self, and the authorities they fabricated as equal to God will disown them.
[11:22] There is no doubt that in the Hereafter, they will be the worst of the losers.

PEACE & SECURITY FOR THE BELIEVERS

[11:23] As for those who believe and lead a life of good works and devote themselves to the One who sustains them, they will dwell in harmony and peace, they abide therein forever.
[11:24] The example of these two groups is like the blind and deaf compared to the seer and hearer. Are they equal? Would you not take heed?

NOAH SENT AS A WARNER

[11:25] We sent Noah to his people saying, "I come to you as a clear warner.
[11:26] "You shall not serve any authority as equal to God. I fear for you the retribution of a painful day."
[11:27] The leaders who disbelieved among his people said, "We see that you are no more than a human being like us and we see that the first people to follow you are the worst among us. We see that you do not possess any advantage over us. Indeed, we think you are a liar."
[11:28] He said, "O my people, what if I rely on clear guidance from the One who sustains me? This is a mercy from His presence, can you not see it? Can we compel you to believe if you do not want to?
[11:29] "O my people, I do not ask you for any money. My reward comes only from God. I cannot dismiss those who believe. They will meet their

[414] **The Taurah** given to Moses (not the Old Testament) and The Quran are both sources of guidance from God. The Quran now encompasses and supersedes all previous revelation. See verses 5:46; 5:48; 28:49.

Sustainer and He alone will judge if they are worst among you. I see that you are quite ignorant.
[11:30] "O my people, who can support me against God, if I dismiss them? Would you not take heed?
[11:31] "I do not claim that I possess the treasures of God nor do I know the future, nor do I claim to be a malaika. Nor do I say to those despised by you that God will not bestow good things upon them. God knows best what is in their innermost thoughts. If I did claim these things, I would be one of the corrupt."
[11:32] They said, "O Noah, you have argued with us too many times and keep on disputing our ways. We defy you to bring the doom you threaten us with, if you are truthful."[415]
[11:33] He said, "God is the One who pronounces disaster according to His ordinance, then you will not escape.
[11:34] "Even if I advised you, my advice cannot benefit you if God's ordinance allows you astray. He is your Sustainer and to Him you will be returned."
[11:35] If they say, "You made up these stories," then say: "If I made it up, then I am responsible for my crime, and I am innocent of any crime you commit."
[11:36] Noah was inspired: "No more of your people are going to believe, beyond those who already believe. Do not be distressed by their actions.
[11:37] "Build a craft under Our watchful eye and with Our inspiration, and do not implore Me on behalf of those who have transgressed, they are destined to drown."
[11:38] While he was building the boat, whenever some of his people passed by him, they mocked him. He said, "You may be amused at us now but we are quietly satisfied that the last laugh will be on you.[416]
[11:39] "You will surely find out who will suffer a shameful retribution and incur an everlasting punishment."
[11:40] When in accordance with Our ordinance the water overflowed, We said, "Carry on the vessel a pair of each kind from your livestock, together with your family, except those who are condemned. Take with you those who have believed," and only a few had believed with him.
[11:41] He said, "Come on board. In the name of God shall be its sailing and its mooring. My Sustainer is Protector, Most Merciful."
[11:42] As it floated along on high waves Noah called his son, who was isolated: "O my son come sail with us. Do not be with those who disbelieve in God's guidance."

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[415] **Argue,** dispute. (Arabic: *jadal.* Root: J'D'L Derivatives: *jadal, jadala, tu-jadilka. yujadilu, jadil, jidal*). See verse 2:197 and footnote.
[416] **The traditional 'ark' that Noah** built was in fact a small boat, a basic raft-like vessel, sufficient to carry his family, a few other people and his livestock, and the flood a local deluge of water.

[11:43] He said, "I will take refuge on top of a hill to protect me from the water." Noah said, "Nothing can protect anyone today from God's decision. Only those worthy of His protection will survive." The flow of water separated them and he was among those who drowned.
[11:44] It was proclaimed: "O earth, swallow your water," and "O sky, cease the downpour." The water subsided and the punishment was concluded. The craft finally rested on the hills of Judi. It was then proclaimed: "The transgressors have perished."

BLOOD RELATIONSHIP IS NO REAL BOND

[11:45] Noah implored his Sustainer: "My Sustainer, my son is of my family and Your promise is the truth. You are most wise."
[11:46] God said, "O Noah, he is not of your family. It is unrighteous to ask Me for something you do not know. I enlighten you, lest you be like the ignorant."
[11:47] He said, "My Sustainer, I seek refuge in You, lest I implore You again for something I do not know. Unless You protect me and have mercy on me, I will be with the losers."
[11:48] It was proclaimed: "O Noah, disembark with peace, and approval is upon you and upon nations who will descend from your companions. As for the other nations descending from you, We will be bountiful to them while they believe in My guidance, then commit them to painful retribution when they depart."
[11:49] This is history from the past that We reveal to you. You had no knowledge about this, neither you nor your people, before this. Therefore be patient. The ultimate victory belongs to those who do good.[417]

DON'T SUPPORT AUTHORITIES TO RIVAL GOD

[11:50] To Aad We sent their brother Hud. He said, "O my people, serve God, there is no other authority to rank with Him. You are only approving authorities to rival Him.
[11:51] O my people, I do not ask you for any payment.[418] My reward comes only from the One who initiated me. Do you not understand?
[11:52] "O my people seek protection from your Sustainer, then turn to Him and repent. He will then provide you with abundance in provisions for you and increase your strength. Do not turn back into corruption."[419]

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[417] **Blood relationship** is no real bond. See verse and footnote 49:10; 60:4.
[418] **God's messengers** never asked for any money from those they sought to guide with God's message. A clear indication of rogues and charlatans is that they are always seeking ways to fleece their flocks. They do this by taking payment for performance of religious rites, fake healing, selling icons and goods (such as holy water and good luck charms) for salvation, operating corrupt charitable organisations and much more. See verses 9:31 and 9:34.
[419] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.

[11:53] They said, "O Hud, you did not show us any proof and we are not abandoning our gods on account of what you say. We will never be believers in the guidance you bring.
[11:54] "We believe that some of our gods have afflicted you with a curse." He said, "I bear witness before God and you bear witness as well, that I disown the authorities you have set up
[11:55] "to rival Him. So, give me your collective decision, without undue delay.
[11:56] "I have put my trust in God, my Sustainer and your Sustainer. There is not a creature that He does not control. All creations progress in accordance with the unchanging laws determined by My Sustainer.
[11:57] "If you turn away, I have delivered to you the complete message I was sent with. My Sustainer can substitute other people in your place. You cannot harm Him in the least. My Sustainer is in control of all things."
[11:58] When Our judgment came, We saved Hud and those who believed with him, as protection from Us. We saved them from a terrible retribution.
[11:59] Such was Aad: they disregarded the guidance of the One who sustains them. They disobeyed His messengers and His message and followed the ways of those who are stubborn and corrupt.
[11:60] Consequently, they incurred condemnation in this world and on the Day of Reckoning. Indeed, Aad rejected their Sustainer. Indeed, Aad and the people of Hud have all perished.

FOLLOWING PARENTS BLINDLY - A TRAGIC MISTAKE

[11:61] To Thamoud We sent their brother Saleh. He said, "O my people, serve God. You have no other protector beside Him. He initiated you from the earth, and continues to prosper you on it. You shall seek His protection, then repent to Him. My Sustainer is always near and responsive."[420]
[11:62] They said, "O Saleh, you used to be well liked among us before this. Are you forbidding us from worshipping what our parents worship? We are very doubtful concerning everything you have told us."[421]
[11:63] He said, "O my people, I am acting on clear proofs from my Sustainer, these are a mercy from Him - who would support me against God, if I disobeyed Him? You can only increase my loss.
[11:64] "O my people, this is God's camel to serve as test of restraint. You shall let her eat from God's earth and do not touch her with any harm, lest you incur an immediate retribution."[422]

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[420] **God's *umra:*** God gives life and sustains it (Arabic: *umr*. Root M'R. Derivative: *ta'mara-kum).* See verse and footnote: 9:18.
[421] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.
[422] **Camel:** a symbol of self-discipline. See verse and footnote 91:14.

[11:65] They slaughtered her. He then said, "You have only three days to live. This was a consequence that was inevitable."
[11:66] When Our punishment came, We saved Saleh and those who believed with him in Our guidance by mercy from Us, from the humiliation of that day. Your Sustainer is the Most Powerful, the Almighty.
[11:67] Those who transgressed were annihilated by a disaster that left them lifeless in their homes.
[11:68] It was as if they never lived there. Indeed, Thamoud rejected their Sustainer. Absolutely, Thamoud incurred their annihilation.

ABRAHAM: GOOD NEWS OF SONS

[11:69] When Our malaika went as messengers to Abraham with good news, they said, "Salamun: Peace." He replied, "Peace," and soon brought some meat of a roasted calf to feed them.[423]
[11:70] When he saw that they did not move to touch it, he became apprehensive and fearful of them. They said, "Do not be afraid, we are being dispatched to the people of Lot."
[11:71] His wife was standing and she laughed when We gave her good news about Isaac and after Isaac, Jacob.
[11:72] She said, "Really? How could I bear a child at my age and here is my husband, an old man? This would really be extraordinary!"
[11:73] They said, "Do you find God's ordinance extraordinary? God has bestowed His mercy and bounties upon you and those who live by the System. He is Most Praiseworthy, Glorious."
[11:74] When Abraham's fear subsided and after the good news was delivered to him, he proceeded to argue on behalf of Lot's people.
[11:75] Indeed, Abraham was clement, extremely kind and obedient.
[11:76] "O Abraham, refrain from this. Your Sustainer's judgment has been issued and they have incurred the inevitable punishment."

LOT: HOMOSEXUAL ACTS CONDEMNED

[11:77] When Our malaika went as messengers to Lot, they were mistreated and he was embarrassed in their presence. He said, "This is a difficult day." [424]
[11:78] Some people had come rushing. They were habitual in their shameless acts. He said, "O my people, it would be purer for you, if you take women instead. You shall reverence God. Do not humiliate me with my guests. Have you not one reasonable man among you?"

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[423] **Peace** (Arabic*: salamun*). Greetings of peace. See verse and footnote 6:54.
[424] **Homosexuality:** Any activity that is regressive to the development of the human Self is prohibited. While homosexuality is not denounced, homosexual acts such as sodomy and buggery (both have similar meaning) are perverted acts that impede the realisation of the Self and are therefore forbidden in the strictest terms. See verses and footnote 7:80-84; 26:160-175; 27:55; 29:29.

[11:79] They said, "You know well that we have no need for any women. You know exactly what we want."
[11:80] He said, "I wish I was strong enough or had a powerful ally."
[11:81] The malaika said, "O Lot, we are your Sustainer's messengers and we pledge these people cannot harm you. You shall leave during the night with your family, except your wife, and let not anyone of you look back. Your wife is condemned along with others who are also condemned. Their appointed time is the early morning. Is the daybreak not soon enough?"
[11:82] When Our punishment came, life was turned upside down and We showered the town with a torrent of hard, shattering rocks.
[11:83] Such an avalanche of rocks fell according to God's ordinance to strike the depraved and the corrupt.

UPHOLDING COMMITMENTS MAKE ECONOMY FLOURISH

[11:84] To Midyan We sent their brother Shu'aib. He said, "O my people, serve God, there is no other authority to rank with Him. Do not cheat when you measure or weigh. I see that you are prosperous and I fear for you the retribution of an overwhelming day.
[11:85] "O my people, you shall give full measure and full weight, equitably. Do not cheat people out of their rights and do not go about the earth to corrupt it.[425]
[11:86] "Whatever God provides for you, no matter how small, is far better for you, if you really are believers. I am not a guardian over you."
[11:87] They said, "O Shu'aib, do establishing these commitments mean that we must abandon our parents' religion, or stop running our businesses in any manner we choose? Surely, you are known for being clement and wise."
[11:88] He said, "O my people, I am acting on clear proofs from my Sustainer. What if He has provided me with great provisions? It is not my wish to impose any hardship on you. I only wish to improve as many things as I can. My guidance comes totally from God and I have put my trust in Him. From Him I seek guidance.
[11:89] "And my people, do not be provoked by your opposition to me into incurring the same disasters as the people of Noah or the people of Hud or the people of Saleh, and the people of Lot were not too distant in their thinking from you.

[425] **Establishing** commitments (Arabic: *solaa*) and keeping them pure of corruption in line with these basic principles can improve the economic system. For the first time in history we have in writing the principle of fair trading standards. It is of course up to governments and local authorities to make laws and by-laws to detail and implement this crucial tenet of fairness as a part of everyday life. Shu'aib was asking his people to implement fair practices: products should be pure and fairly priced. The right goods for the right price. See footnote to verse 2:3.

[11:90] "You shall seek protection from your Sustainer and turn to Him for repentance. My Sustainer is Most Merciful and most Kind."[426]
[11:91] They said, "O Shu'aib, we do not understand many of the things you are telling us and we see that you are defenceless among us. If it were not for your family's status, we would have stoned you. You are worthless for us."[427]
[11:92] He said, "O my people, does my family command a greater respect than God? Is this why you have been heedless of Him? My Sustainer is fully aware of everything you do.
[11:93] "O my people, go on doing what you wish and so will I. You will certainly find out which of us will incur shameful retribution. You will find out who is a liar. Just wait in anticipation and I will wait in expectation along with you."
[11:94] When Our judgment came, We saved Shu'aib and those who believed with him, as a mercy from Us. As for the corrupt ones, they were struck by a disaster that left them dead in their homes.
[11:95] It was as though they never existed. Thus, Midyan perished, just like Thamoud had perished before that.

DON'T FOLLOW AUTHORITIES TO EQUAL GOD

[11:96] We sent Moses with Our signs and a profound authority
[11:97] To Firawn and his elders. But they followed the authority of Firawn, and Firawn's rule was not enlightened.
[11:98] He will lead his people on the Day of Reckoning, all the way to a life of hell. What a miserable situation to live in!
[11:99] They have incurred condemnation in this life, as well as on the Day of reckoning. What a miserable path to follow.

LESSONS FROM THE PAST

[11:100] These are some events from the past communities that We narrate to you. Some are still standing and some have vanished.
[11:101] We never wronged them, it is they who wronged their own Self. Their gods, idols and authorities whom they invoked beside God could not help them in the least when the judgment of your Sustainer came. In fact, their actions only ensured their disaster.
[11:102] Such was the punishment in accordance with the ordinance of your Sustainer's law when the communities became corrupt. Indeed, His retribution is painful and devastating.

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[426] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.
[427] **Stoning** as a punishment is not decreed in the Quran. In the Quran stoning is only carried out by mushriks, disbelievers and those who reject this guidance. See verses 18:20; 19:46; 26:116; 36:18.

[11:103] This should be a lesson for those who want to avoid the retribution in the life to come. That is a day when all the people will be summoned, a day they will indeed witness.
[11:104] We have ordained a specific time for this period.
[11:105] The day it comes to pass no Self will utter a single word except in consistence with His ordinance. Some will be miserable and some will be happy.
[11:106] As for the miserable ones, they will be facing a life of hell wherein they cry and scream when they realise what they have done.
[11:107] Eternally they abide therein for as long as the heavens and the earth endure, in accordance with the ordinance of your Sustainer. Your Sustainer does everything consistent with His ordinance.
[11:108] As for those who do good works, they will enjoy a life of harmony and peace. Eternally they abide therein for as long as the heavens and the earth endure, in accordance with the ordinance of your Sustainer, an everlasting reward.

DON'T FOLLOW YOUR PARENTS BLINDLY

[11:109] Do not have any doubt regarding what these people serve? They serve exactly those they found their parents serving. We will punish them their due share fully without any reduction.
[11:110] We have given Moses the scripture but it was disputed and if it were not for your God's ordinance they would have been judged immediately. They are also full of doubt about this and are suspicious.
[11:111] Your Sustainer will surely recompense everyone for their works. He is fully aware of everything they do.
[11:112] Therefore, continue on the path you have been encouraged to follow together with those who turn to Him in repentance, and do not transgress. God sees everything you do.[428]
[11:113] Do not be like those who have done wrong, lest you incur a torment of hell and find no friends to help you against God, then end up as losers.

FULFIL YOUR COMMITMENTS AT ALL TIMES

[11:114] You shall fulfil your commitments from the start of the day to the end of the day, and during the night. The good works rescind the evil works. This is a reminder for those who take heed.[429]
[11:115] You shall steadfastly persevere for God never fails to reward those who do good.

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[428] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.
[429] **Commitments** (Arabic: *solaa*) require to be fulfilled during all hours; day or night. Good works rectify all wrongdoings. See verses and footnotes 2:3 and 25:70. Also see 25:72-77.

[11:116] If only some of those among the previous generations used their intelligence and forbade evil. According to God's ordinance only a few of them deserved to be saved. As for the corrupt, they were preoccupied with their extravagances and they are guilty of hedonism.
[11:117] Your Sustainer never annihilates any community unjustly, while its people do good.

CHOICE: A RIGHT OF EVERY FREE BEING

[11:118] Had your Sustainer willed, all the people could have been compelled to be a single community of believers. But they abuse their freedom and continue to dispute the truth.[430]
[11:119] Only those who attract the mercy from your Sustainer will not dispute the truth and realise the purpose of their creation. The verdict of your Sustainer is already taking place. The turmoil of hell engulfs most of the visible and invisible creations.[431]
[11:120] We narrate to you enough history of the messengers to strengthen your confidence. The truth has come to you herein as well as enlightenments and reminders for those who believe in this guidance.
[11:121] Say to those who disbelieve, "Do whatever you can and so will we.
[11:122] "Then wait, we too will wait."
[11:123] To God belongs the future of the heavens and the earth and all matters are controlled by Him. You shall serve Him and trust in Him. Your Sustainer is never unaware of anything you do.

[430] **The human being** has 'free will' and can choose, while other creations such as the solar system, the plants, the animals follow determined laws. God could have created people the same way. However, individuals develop or regress by the choices they make and must have the freedom do so. There is no value in forced belief. See verses and footnotes 2:31; 10:99; 16:68.
[431] **Every individual** is free to 'ignite' their conscience to do good and the power to attract good things in life. The mercy of God then creates an environment to develop your 'Self' in preparation for the next stage in life. See verses and footnotes 2:185; 3:142; 51:6; 67:2; 90:4 and 13:31. Each person can ignite the spark within himself to initiate positive changes in his life. See verses and footnotes 10:9; 13:11; 17:45; 22:16; 28:56 and verse 7:172.

Sura 12: Joseph (Yousaf)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[12:1] A.L.R. These are the profound verses of this clear and distinct guidance.
[12:2] We have revealed it in an Arabic language that you may understand.[432]
[12:3] We narrate to you the most accurate history through the revelation of this Quran. Before this, you were totally unaware.
[12:4] Recall that Joseph said to his father, "O my father, I saw eleven planets and the sun and the moon, and that they conceded before me."
[12:5] He said, "My son do not tell your brothers about your dream, lest they plot and scheme against you. Surely jealousy is man's worst enemy.
[12:6] "Your Sustainer has thus made you privileged and has given you good news[433] through inspiration. He has advanced you and the family of Jacob, as He did for your ancestors Abraham and Isaac before that. Your Sustainer is aware, Most Wise."
[12:7] In Joseph and his brothers' history there are lessons for those who seek guidance.
[12:8] They said, "Joseph and his brother are favoured by our father and there are more of us. Indeed, our father is unfair to us.[434]

PLANS AGAINST JOSEPH

[12:9] "Let us kill Joseph or banish him that we may get some attention from our father. Afterwards, we can be righteous people."
[12:10] One of them said, "Do not kill Joseph. Let us throw him into the abyss of the well. Perhaps some caravan can pick him up, if this is what you decide to do."
[12:11] They said, "Our father, why do you not trust us with Joseph? We will take good care of him.
[12:12] "Send him with us tomorrow to enjoy and play. We will protect him."
[12:13] He said, "I worry lest you go away with him, then a wolf may devour him while you are not watching him."
[12:14] They said, "Indeed, if a wolf devours him with so many of us around, then we really are losers."
[12:15] When they went away with him and unanimously decided to throw him into a deep well. We inspired Joseph: "Someday, you will tell them about all this, while they have no idea."

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[432] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). The Quran was revealed in Arabic as the original recipients of this message were Arabic speaking people. Now the Quran's message can be and should be translated to reach all the people. See verse 14:4. See verses and footnotes 41:44, 26:198 & 2:185.
[433] **News:** (Arabic: *hadith*). See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.
[434] **It was Joseph's** half-brothers who were plotting.

[12:16] They came back to their father in the evening, weeping.
[12:17] They said, "Our father, we went racing with each other, leaving Joseph with our equipment and a wolf devoured him. You will never believe us, even though we are telling the truth."
[12:18] They produced his shirt with some blood on it, pretending it was his. He said, "Indeed, you have conspired with each other to commit a certain scheme. All I can do is resort to a quiet patience. May God help me in the face of your conspiracy."

JOSEPH RESCUED AND TAKEN TO MISR

[12:19] A caravan soon passed by and sent their servant to get some water. He let down his bucket into the well, then said, "How lucky! There is a boy here!" They took him along as merchandise and God was fully aware of what they did.
[12:20] They sold him cheaply for a few coins, because they did not have any need for him.
[12:21] The one who bought him from Misr[435] said to his wife, "Take good care of him. Maybe he can help us or maybe we can adopt him." We thus established Joseph in that territory and We made him perceptive so that he could interpret events.[436] God's command is always done, but most people do not know.
[12:22] When he reached maturity, We endowed him with wisdom and knowledge. We thus reward the righteous.

GOVERNOR'S WIFE TRIES TO SEDUCE JOSEPH

[12:23] With whom he lived, his wife had her own game plan and tried to seduce him. She closed the doors and said, "I am all yours." Joseph said, "May God protect me. He is my Sustainer, who has given me a place of honour. The corrupt never succeed."
[12:24] She surrendered to him and he almost succumbed to her, if it were not that he remembered the One who sustains him. We thus diverted evil and depravity away from him for he was one of Our devoted servants.
[12:25] He raced towards the door and she swiftly followed. In the chase, she tore his garment from his back. They found her husband at the door. She said, "What should be the punishment for one who wanted to molest your wife, except imprisonment or a painful penalty?"
[12:26] Joseph said, "She is the one who tried to seduce me." A witness from her family suggested: "If his garment is torn from the front, then she is telling the truth and he is a liar.

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[435] **Misr:** a secure trade station, of which there were many and bears no geographical location to Qubt, or Egypt as it is known today. This is not the same misr as the one Firawn ruled with tyranny. See verse and footnote 2:61.
[436] **Event:** (Arabic: *hadith*). See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.

[12:27] "And if his garment is torn from the back, then she lied and he is telling the truth."
[12:28] When her husband saw that his garment was torn from the back, he said, "This is a woman's scheme. Indeed, your conniving is terrible.
[12:29] "Joseph, disregard this incident. As for you, my wife, you should seek protection for your wrong. You have committed a grave error."

[12:30] Some women in the city gossiped: "The governor's wife is trying to seduce her servant. She is deeply in love with him. We see that she has gone adrift."
[12:31] When she heard of their gossip, she invited them, prepared for them a comfortable place to relax, with fruits and cutlery. She then called for him, "Enter." When they saw him, they exalted him and in their admiration, they became so flustered that they cut their hands. They said, "Glory be to God, this is not a human being. He is the one like a most handsome angel."[437]
[12:32] She said, "This is the one you blamed me for falling in love with. I did indeed try to seduce him and he refused me. Unless he does what I command him to do, he will surely go to prison and will be debased."
[12:33] He said, "My Sustainer, the prison is better than giving in to them. Unless You divert their scheming from me, I may desire them and behave like those who are self-indulgent."
[12:34] His Sustainer answered his request and diverted their scheming from him. He is the Hearer and aware of all things.
[12:35] Later, she saw to it, despite the plain evidence of his innocence, that he was imprisoned for some time.

JOSEPH IN PRISON

[12:36] Two young men were in the prison with him. One of them said, "I saw in my dream that I was making wine," and the other said, "I saw myself carrying bread on my head from which the birds were eating. Tell us of the meaning of these dreams. We see that you are a perceptive man."
[12:37] He said, "If any food is to be provided to you, I can inform you about it before you receive it. This is some of the knowledge bestowed upon me by my Sustainer. I have forsaken the creed of all people who do not believe in God and with regard to the life yet to come they really are disbelievers.
[12:38] "And I followed instead this Deen-Islam, the creed of my forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and we never set up any authority to equal God.

[437] **Angel:** Those who have no proper knowledge believe the malaika to be angels, handsome winged celestial creatures. See verse and footnote 2:30; 6:8.

For us and for all mankind it is a benevolence from God but most people are unappreciative.[438]
[12:39] "O my prison mates, is it better to serve several masters or the One God, the Supreme?
[12:40] "You do not serve beside Him except innovations that you have made up, you and your parents. God never endorsed such authority. All decrees belongs to God and He has ruled that you shall not serve anyone as equal to Him. This Deen-Islam is the perfect and balanced Social Order but most people do not know.
[12:41] "O my prison mates, one of you will be the wine butler for his master, while the other will be crucified and the birds will then feed from his head. This is the explanation about the matter which you have inquired."
[12:42] He then said to the one to be saved "Remember me to your lord and master." However, his ego caused him to forget to mention Joseph to his master and consequently Joseph remained in prison a few more years.

JOSEPH'S INSIGHT: THE MASTER'S DREAM

[12:43] The master said, "I saw seven fat cows being devoured by seven skinny cows and seven green spikes of wheat and others that were shrivelled. O my elders explain my dream to me, if you know how to interpret them."
[12:44] They said, "These dreams are nonsense. When it comes to the interpretation of such dreams, we do not know anything."
[12:45] The one who was saved from the prison said, now that he finally remembered, "I can tell you what it means, but first let me speak to Joseph."

[12:46] "Joseph my friend, tell me about seven fat cows being devoured by seven skinny cows and seven green spikes and others shrivelled. I wish to go back with some information for some people."
[12:47] He said, "What you cultivate during the next seven years when the time of harvest comes, leave the grains in their spikes and you should not consume any except the minimum.
[12:48] "After that seven years of drought will come which will desolate your crops and you will use most of what you have stored.

[438] **Most of us** prefer to go on a journey with a map and over a well travelled road to reach our destination quicker, safer and in comfort. The Quran is the moral compass and a guide with Permanent Values. This guidance is a mercy from God, it means that we do not have to suffer the mishaps of trial and error. This Deen, a working social system, has come to us readymade: a road to peace and security for those who want to be protected from lasting harm. This is why Joseph followed the well trodden path of his forefathers as decreed by God.

[12:49] "After that a year will come that brings rain for all the people and they will once again press wine and oil."[439]
[12:50] The master said, "Bring him to me." When the messenger came to him, Joseph said, "Go back to your master and ask him to investigate the women who cut their hands. My Sustainer is fully aware of their schemes."
[12:51] The master said to the women, "What do you know about the incident when you tried to seduce Joseph?" They said, "God forbid, we did not know of anything evil committed by him." The wife of the governor said, "Now the truth has prevailed. I am the one who tried to seduce him and he was the one who spoke the truth.
[12:52] "I hope that he will realise that I never betrayed him in his absence, for God does not bless the schemes of the betrayers.
[12:53] "I do not claim innocence for myself. The Self is an advocate of vice, except for those who have attained mercy from their Sustainer. The One who sustains me is the best Protector and the Most Merciful."

JOSEPH ACHIEVES HIGH STATUS

[12:54] The governor said, "Bring him to me, so I can hire him to work for me." After he spoke with him, he said, "Today, you have a prominent position with us."
[12:55] Joseph said, "Make me the treasurer, for I am experienced in this area and knowledgeable."
[12:56] We thus established Joseph in this region to oversee and administrate as he wished. We shower Our mercy upon whomever We will, according to Our ordinance, and We never fail to recompense the righteous.
[12:57] Additionally, the reward in the life to come is even better for those who believe and lead a righteous life.[440]

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[439] **Wine and oil** aplenty are signs of a flourishing community. As mark of prosperity Joseph does not say there will be surplus grain, but oil and wine will flow. It is apparent that people in Joseph's time enjoyed drinking wine and it was not forbidden. There is also no decree in the Quran that even now makes it 'haram', the word used to restrict or forbid something. God knows both the words 'alcohol' and 'haram' and he could have used them, but did not use either. God never errs or forgets see verse 20:52. **Muslims** introduced wine grapes into Sicily and in the late 1800's and early 1900's Muslim countries in North Africa were the biggest suppliers of wines to Europe, far more than France, Spain and Italy put together. Along with Egypt, Turkey and Malaysia, the Islamic State of Pakistan also produces alcoholic beverages, mainly beer and spirits. Established in 1860, The Murree Brewing Company, now one of the top companies in Pakistan, produces world class prize-winning whisky. It's also no secret that many of the elite from these and other Muslim countries are no teetotallers. See verses and footnotes 2:219; 4:43; 5:90; 12:36; 12:41; 16:67; 47:15. When God restricts or forbids something He uses the word *haram.* See verses 7:33; 7:70; 10:59; 16:115-116; 33:62.

[440] **Those who believe** and implement this guidance in full are best rewarded, however, as these verses [12:56 & 12:57] make clear anyone who does good works is recompensed. No one suffers injustice. See verses 2:181; 3:25; 4:40; 6:160; 10:47; 16:111; 17:71; 19:60; 21:47; 45:22; 65:1. See also verse and footnote 28:53.

[12:58] Joseph's brothers came for supplies. When they entered he recognised them while they did not recognise him.
[12:59] After he provided them with their provisions he said, "Next time, bring with you your half-brother. Do you not see that I give full measure and treat you generously?
[12:60] "If you fail to bring him to me, you will get no share from me and you will not even come close."
[12:61] They said, "We will ask our father to allow him to accompany us. We will surely do this."
[12:62] He then instructed his assistants: "Put the goods we received from them as payment back in their bags. When they find them upon their return to their family they may come back sooner."

[12:63] When they returned to their father, they said, "Our father, we can no longer get any provisions unless you send our brother with us. We promise to take good care of him."
[12:64] He said, "Shall I trust you with him as I trusted you with his brother before that? God is the best protector and of all the merciful ones, He is the Most Merciful."
[12:65] When they opened their bags they found their goods returned to them. They said, "Our father what more can we ask for? Here are our goods returned to us. We can thus provide for our family, protect our brother and receive one more camel-load. This is certainly a profitable deal."
[12:66] He said, "I will not send him with you, unless you give me a solemn pledge before God that you will bring him back, unless you are utterly overwhelmed." When they gave him their solemn pledge, he said, "God is witnessing everything we say."
[12:67] And he said, "O my sons, avoid attracting attention and do not enter from one gate. Enter through separate gates. However, I cannot save you from anything that happens according to God's ordinance. To God belongs all judgments. I trust in Him, and in Him shall put their dependence all those who show their true allegiance.[441]

JOSEPH MEETS HIS BROTHER

[12:68] When they went to Joseph they entered in accordance with their father's instructions. Although this could not change anything that happens according to the ordinance of God, Jacob had a reason for asking them to do

[441] **Jacob** advised his children not to enter Misr from the same gate, but to enter it from different gates. The question is: Was Egypt surrounded by a wall that had several gates leading into it? History shows that walls and various gates were erected only around fortified cities or citadels and not around entire lands, or along entire borders of a country - with exception of China. The conclusion: Joseph's Misr was not Egypt, or Qubt as it was then known. See verses and footnotes 2:61; 12:111; 43:51.

this. For he possessed certain knowledge that We taught him but most people do not know.
[12:69] When they entered Joseph's place he brought his brother closer to him and said, "I am your brother, do not be saddened by their actions."

[12:70] When he provided his half-brothers with their supplies, he placed a valuable chalice in his brother's bag, then as planned, one of Joseph's assistants announced: "The owners of this caravan are thieves."
[12:71] They said, as they came towards them, "What is it that you have lost?"
[12:72] Joseph's assistant said, "We lost our master's chalice. Anyone who returns it will receive an extra camel-load. I personally guarantee this."
[12:73] The brothers said, "By God, you know full well that we did not come here to commit evil nor are we thieves."
[12:74] Joseph's men asked, "Do you know what the punishment is for the thief, if you are liars?"
[12:75] The brothers said, "The punishment, if the missing chalice is found in his bag, is that the thief belongs to you. We thus punish the guilty."
[12:76] Joseph then started by inspecting their baggage, before getting to his brother's belongings and he then extracted the chalice out of his brother's bag. We thus fulfilled the plan for Joseph. He could not have kept his brother if he applied the governor's law, so by design the brothers' ruling was used and this too by the ordinance of God. We exalt whomever We choose to higher ranks. Above every knowledgeable one there is one who not only has more knowledge but surpasses in experience too.
[12:77] The brothers said, "If he stole, so did a brother of his in the past." Joseph concealed his feelings in himself and did not give them any hint of how he felt. He thought to himself, "You are really appalling individuals. God is fully aware of your accusations."
[12:78] They said to Joseph, "O you noble one, he has a father who is elderly. Would you take one of us in his place? We see that you are a kind man."
[12:79] He said, "God forbid that we should take other than the one in whose possession we found our goods. Otherwise we would be unjust."
[12:80] When they realised that he would not change his mind, they conferred together. Their eldest said, "Do you realise that our father has taken a solemn pledge from us before God? In the past you lost Joseph. I am not leaving this place until my father gives me permission or until God judges for me. He is the best Judge.

THE BROTHERS BRING BAD NEWS

[12:81] They went back to their father and told him: "Our father, your son has committed a theft. We know for sure, because this is what we have witnessed. This was an unexpected occurrence."

[12:82] "You may ask the people from where we returned and the caravan that came back with us. We are telling the truth.' "
[12:83] Jacob said, "Indeed, you have conspired to carry out some kind of plot. Now quiet patience is my only recourse. May God bring them both back to me. He is aware of all things, Most Wise."
[12:84] He turned away from them, saying, "I am still grieving over Joseph." His eyes turned white from grieving so much. He was truly heartbroken.
[12:85] They said, "By God, you will keep on grieving over Joseph until you become ill or until you die."
[12:86] He said, "I simply render my grief and dilemma only to God, for I know from God what you do not know.
[12:87] "O my sons, go and look for Joseph and his brother and never despair of God's grace. None despairs of God's grace except the people who disbelieve"

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS RETURN TO MISR

[12:88] When they entered Joseph's residence, they said, "O you noble one, we have suffered a great deal of hardship, along with our family, and we have brought inferior goods to exchange for grain. But we hope that you will give us full measure and treat us sincerely. God rewards the sincere."
[12:89] He said, "Do you recall what you did to Joseph and his brother when you were ignorant?"
[12:90] They said, "You must be Joseph." He said, "I am Joseph and here is my brother. God has bestowed upon us great things. That is because if one leads a righteous life and steadfastly perseveres, God never fails to reward those who do good."
[12:91] They said, "By God, God has truly preferred you over us. We were really wrong."
[12:92] He said, "There is no blame upon you today. May God protect you. Of all those who are merciful, He is the Most Merciful.
[12:93] "Take this shirt of mine. When you rub it on my father's face his sight will be restored. Bring your whole family and come back to me."

GOOD NEWS FOR JOSEPH'S FATHER

[12:94] Even before the caravan arrived, their father said, "I can sense the smell of Joseph. Will someone tell me something?"
[12:95] His family said, "By God, you are still in your old confusion."
[12:96] When the bearer of good news arrived, he threw the shirt on Jacob's face, whereupon his sight was restored. He said, "Did I not tell you that I knew from God what you did not know?"
[12:97] The brothers said, "Our father, ask God for our protection. We were wrong indeed."

[12:98] He said, "I will implore the One who sustains me to protect you. He is the Protector, Most Merciful."
[12:99] When they entered Joseph's home, he embraced his parents, saying, "Welcome to Misr. God willing, you will be safe here."[442]
[12:100] He raised his parents' eminence and they acknowledged his status. He said, "O my father, this is the fulfilment of my old dream. My Sustainer has made it come true. He has set me apart, delivered me from the prison and brought you from the desert after evil thoughts had driven a wedge between me and my brothers. My Sustainer is most kind and consistent with his ordinance. He is the Knower, the Most Wise."[443]
[12:101] "My Sustainer, You have given me power and taught me the interpretation of events.[444] Initiator of the heavens and the earth, You are my Sustainer and Protector in this life and in the life yet to come. Let me die as one who has submitted to your guidance and count me with those who do good works."
[12:102] This is some of the truthful history that we reveal to you. You were not present when they made their wicked plan to throw Joseph in the well, as they conspired together.

THE MAJORITY OF 'BELIEVERS' COMMIT TREASON

[12:103] Most people, no matter what you do, will not believe.
[12:104] You are not asking them for any money. You simply deliver this reminder for all mankind.
[12:105] A great many proofs in the heavens and the earth are given to them, but they pass by them, heedlessly.
[12:106] The majority of those who profess to believe in God, do not do so without setting up authorities to equal or rival Him.[445]

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[442] **Misr:** a secure trade station of which there were many. However, this bears no geographical location to Qubt or Egypt, as it is known today. See verses and footnotes 2:61; 12:111.
[443] **Parents** must be respected at all times, and here Joseph has the opportunity to raise his parents' position both in status and wealth, and does so without hesitation, thus fulfilling his duty to his believing parents. See verse and footnote 46:15. Also see 17:22-28 & 60:4.
[444] **Event:** (Arabic: *hadith*). See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.
[445] **The majority** who profess belief in the One God also commit *shirk*: high treason. Accepting and applying laws, rules, customs or traditions that conflict with the laws of God's guidance is an offence of the highest degree. It is easier to believe than to do good, that is why there are more believers than those who actively do good. It easier to take part in rituals like prayer or pilgrimage as it gives a sense of having fulfilled one's duty, but to fulfil obligations and remain steadfast throughout one's life is a greater commitment and a greater sacrifice. This is difficult, except for those who follow this guidance. Believing in God and in His guidance, but applying laws other than the Quran makes a person *mushriq*, the one who commits shirk, high treason. Could it be that 'believers' have rejected the teachings of the Quran while believing they have not? Disbelieving while professing belief: see verses: 6:22; 10:31, 24:47-50. See also: 3:23-24; 9:1-10; 18:103-108; 57:16. **Disbelievers** think they are believers. See verses: 10:28-30; 13:16; 23:84-90; 29:61-62;

[12:107] Have they guaranteed that an overwhelming retribution from God will not strike them or the Hour will not come to them suddenly when they least expect it?

[12:108] Say: "This is my path: I invite you to God, I rely on clear insight from the One who sustains me and so do those who follow me. God be glorified. I am not of those who set up any authority to equal God."
[12:109] We did not send before you except men whom We inspired, chosen from the people of various communities. Did they not roam the earth and see the consequences for those before them? The abode of the life yet to come is far better for those who lead a life of good works. Would you not then understand?

THE QURAN: A GUIDANCE FULLY DETAILED

[12:110] Just when the messengers despair and think that they have been rejected, Our victory comes to them. We then save those who deserve saving according to Our ordinance, while Our retribution for the guilty individuals is unavoidable.
[12:111] In the truthful history recounted here there are lessons for those who possess intelligence. These are not fabricated hadith. This narration confirms all previous scriptures and fully details all things and is a beacon of guidance and a mercy for those who believe.[446]

31:25-26; 39:3; 39:39; 43:9; 43:87 & 12:106; 25:30. God alone 40:12; 40:84. **Opinion** no substitute for truth. See also verse and footnote 38:26.

[446] **History** in the Quran is truthful and serves as lessons for mankind as opposed to the many spurious hadith wrongly attributed to God's messenger and giving false historical accounts for political gain. This Quran, however, is the truth and not a fabricated hadith. It is a fully detailed and truthful guidance. See footnote to verse 4:42. **Misr of Joseph:** misr (plural: *amsar*) is a secure trade station, of which there were many and bears no geographical connection to Egypt. Joseph lived in a land that depended on rain, while Egypt depended on the flooding of the Nile for its agriculture. Therefore the events being described in this history did not take place in Egypt. The Quran is talking about a land that depended on rainwater for agriculture, a land whose plentiful rivers could dry up if rain stopped for a lengthy period, a land whose rivers were not permanently flowing like the Nile. See verse 12:49. **Jacob and his children** lived close to a trade route, since his brothers knew for certain that a caravan would pass and pick Joseph up from the well in which they had dropped him. The selling of Joseph for a cheap price indicates that the merchants sold him at the earliest opportunity: 1. To be rid of the expenses to sustain the boy (food, drink, and encumbrance of carrying live merchandise). 2. The boy was acquired for free, so the business mentality dictated that they offer him up for sale before the expenses exceeded the prospective income. This confirms there was no chance Joseph could have remained in the merchant's possession the whole distance between Palestine and Egypt, as traditionalist believe, and Joseph ended not very far from his home. Evidence suggests that the trade stations were actually places that constituted not only markets, but also rest and service stops for caravans, and places where the traders could meet with locals who would sell their own goods and labour. It is a fact that the trade caravans could not afford to burden themselves with supplies of food and water in place of profitable goods, so they relied on such caravan stops. This was one of the many ways that

Sura 13: The Thunder (Al-Ra'ad)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[13:1] A. L. M. R. The verses of this guidance revealed to you from your Sustainer are the truth, but most people do not believe.
[13:2] God is the One who raised the heavens without visible pillars, then assumed all authority. He committed the sun and the moon to serve, each moving in its designated orbit for a period determined according to His ordinance.[447] He has control over all things and explains this guidance, that you may attain certainty about meeting the One who sustains you.
[13:3] He is the One who constructed the earth and placed on it mountains and rivers. And from the different kinds of fruits, He made into pairs: males and females, and the night overtakes the day. These are firm signs for people who reflect.
[13:4] On earth there are adjacent lands that cultivate vineyards, crops, palm trees, dioecious and non-dioecious.[448] Although they are irrigated with the same water, you prefer eating some of them over others. In these signs are unyielding proofs for people who understand.

THE CONTINUOUS LIFE

[13:5] If you ever marvel, the real wonder is their saying: "After we turn into dust, do we get recreated anew?"[449] These are the ones who have disbelieved in the One who sustains them. These are the ones who have formed mental barriers around their minds. These are the ones who have incurred the torment of hell in their conscience, a situation in which they abide forever.
[13:6] They challenge you to bring doom upon them rather than turn to do good. Sufficient precedents have been set for them in the past. Indeed, your

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ancient Arabia became fabulously rich. Certain caravan stops achieved significant strategic importance, either due to the fact that they were located on the intersection of several trade routes, or because they were surrounded by many villages, hence providing them with large markets. These were important trade centres where good and services were bought and sold. Jacob's village was not very far from one such misr. See verses and footnotes 2:61; 12:10,16,19, 20-21; 12:111. Firawn's misr: verse 43:51.

[447] **What holds** the sky up? In simple terms the Earth provides an equal and opposite reaction to the atmosphere: air pressure from the air below pushes in all directions and this keeps the atmosphere from collapsing. This fact in addition to the details that both the moon and the sun are orbiting was not known at the time of the Quran's revelation, even to the extent that it was not accepted that the earth was a spheroid until much later. See verse 7:201; 20:53; 68:52.

[448] **Dioecious** species have the male and female reproductive structures on separate plants. A statement found in the Quran, previously considered absurd but now accepted as a verifiable scientific fact. **Sexuality in plant life:** see verse and footnote 20:53.

[449] **In the evolutionary** process this life is continuous and the 'death' is a transition to another dimension. Just as people expect to wake up after a night's sleep, those who understand the Quran's message expect to emerge after death in a different life.

Sustainer is swift in providing protection towards mankind, in spite of their wrongdoing. And your Sustainer is also strict in enforcing retribution.
[13:7] Those who disbelieved say: "If only a miracle could come down to him from his Sustainer, we will then believe." You are simply a warner, every community receives a guiding teacher.

[13:8] God knows what every female bears and what every womb releases or gains. Everything in His domain is perfectly measured by God
[13:9] the Knower of all secrets and declarations. The Supreme and the Most High.
[13:10] It is the same whether you conceal your thoughts or declare them or hide in the darkness of the night or act in the light of day.
[13:11] There are energies around you, above and below, protecting in accordance with God's ordinance. Thus, God does not change the condition of any people unless they change what is within themselves. If people suffer any hardship in accordance with God's ordinance, no power can alleviate it. They have none besides Him as Sustainer and Protector.[450]
[13:12] He is the One who shows you the lightning as a source of fear as well as a source of hope and He moves the loaded clouds.

GOD HAS POWER OVER ALL THINGS

[13:13] The thunder glorifies God and so do the elements by conceding to His laws. He sends the lightning bolts which also strike in accordance with His ordinance. Yet they argue about God, though His power is awesome.[451]
[13:14] Imploring Him is the only reasonable supplication, while the authorities they pay homage to beside Him cannot ever respond. Thus, they are like those who stretch their hands to reach some water, but it's like a mirage and cannot quench their thirst. The supplications of the disbelievers are in vain and never reach their desired conclusion.

[13:15] To God concedes everything in the heavens and the earth willingly or unwillingly and so do their shadows in the mornings and the evenings.[452]
[13:16] Ask them, "Who is the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth?" They reply, "God." Then say: "Why then do you set up authorities to rank with Him as masters who do not possess any power to benefit or harm even themselves?" Say: "Are the blind and the seeing equal or is the depths

[450] **To attract** positive energies each individual must first ignite the spark within himself to initiate changes in his life. You must be the change you want to see in the world. The Quran provides the perfect platform for making the foundations of those changes. See verses 8:25; 8:53.
[451] **The climate,** good or bad, works consistently within God's law and in serving Him glorifies His power, as do the malaika, the elements and energies that are an integral part of this universe. See verse 59:24.
[452] **All creations** submit to God's ordinance. While they have limited free will, the disbelievers and hypocrites too submit to God, when their bodies function under natural laws.

of darkness equal to the light?" Have they found an authority besides God who initiated creations similar to His creations to the point of not distinguishing the two creations? Say: "God is the Creator of all things and He is the One, the Supreme."[453]

ONLY GOOD THINGS ENDURE

[13:17] He sends down water from the sky causing the valleys to overflow, then the rapids produce abundant foam. Similarly, when they use fire to refine metals for their jewellery or equipment, scum is produced. God thus cites analogies for the truth and falsehood. As for the scum it is useless and goes to waste, while that which benefits the people prospers the earth. God thus advances a similitude.

[13:18] Those who respond to their Sustainer deserve good rewards. As for those who fail to respond to Him, if they possessed everything on earth, even twice as much, they would readily give it up as ransom. They have incurred the worst reckoning and their final abode is hell. What a miserable end.

THE SINCERE BELIEVERS

[13:19] Is one who sees that your Sustainer's guidance to you is the truth equal to one who is blind to its acceptance? Only those who possess intelligence take heed.

[13:20] They are the ones who fulfil their pledge to God and do not violate their covenant.[454]

[13:21] They unite to do what God has obligated them to do and keep their duty to their Sustainer and fear the dreadful reckoning.

[13:22] They steadfastly persevere in seeking the guidance of their Sustainer, observe their commitments, spend for the good of social welfare from Our provisions to them privately and publicly and counter evil with good. These have deserved the best abode.[455]

[13:23] They enter the gardens of tranquillity together with the righteous among their parents, their spouses and their children. The malaika will welcome them from everywhere.

[13:24] "Salamun Alaikum: Peace be upon you, because you steadfastly persevered. What a happy end."[456]

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[453] **Those who** profess to believe in the One God can actually be mushriks. See verse: 12:106.

[454] **Pledge to God.** This verse is a reminder that a contract exists between God and each and every individual. See verses 5:7; 7:172; 13:20; 30:30; 76:4. See also verse and footnote 4:74-78.

[455] **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. The essence of this duty is to give dignity not charity. See verses and footnotes 2:3; 2:215.

[456] **Peace be upon you:** (Arabic: *salamun alaikum*). Greeting approved by God. See verse and footnote 6:54.

[13:25] As for those who violate God's covenant after pledging to keep it and sever what God has commanded to be joined and commit evil and corruption, they have incurred condemnation, they have incurred the worst ending.

GOD CONTROLS ALL PROVISIONS

[13:26] God is the One who increases the provision for whomever He wills or withholds it. They have become preoccupied with this life, and this life compared to the life yet to come is nothing.
[13:27] Those who disbelieve say "If only a miracle could come down to him from his Sustainer we will then believe." Say: "God allows them astray only in accordance with His ordinance, and engages with only those who follow His guidance."
[13:28] They are the ones whose hearts celebrate in remembering God. Absolutely, by keeping their duty to God your hearts find contentment.
[13:29] Those who believe and lead a righteous life have deserved happiness and a contented future.

GOD'S ORDINANCE WORKS IN PERFECT HARMONY

[13:30] We have sent you to this community, just as We did for other communities in the past. You shall deliver to them what We reveal to you, for they have disbelieved in the Most Gracious. Say: "He is my Sustainer. There is no authority to rank with Him. I put my trust in Him alone, to Him is my ultimate return."

[13:31] Even if this Quran caused mountains to move or the earth to tear asunder or the dead to speak, they will not believe. God controls all things. Is it not time for the believers to give up and realise that if God willed, He could have guided all the people? The disbelievers will continue to suffer disasters as a consequence of their own works or have disasters strike close to them until God's decree is fulfilled. God's ordinance never fails to work consistently.[457]
[13:32] Messengers before you have been ridiculed. I allowed the disbelievers to carry on, then I punished them. How terrible was My retribution!
[13:33] Is there any equal to the One who controls every single Self? Yet, they set up authorities to rival God. Say: "Name them. Are you informing Him of something on earth that He does not know? Or are you fabricating empty statements?" Indeed, the schemes of those who disbelieve seem

[457] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). God could have guided everyone with ease, but what value would that have? People develop and grow to be fit for a better world on their own merit with dignity and in the hurly burly of life - not by charity or favour. See verses and footnotes 2:185; 3:142; 51:6; 67:2; 90:4. See also verse 11:119.

good in their eyes. They are thus diverted from the right path. Whomever God's ordinance allows astray can never find a guiding teacher.
[13:34] They have incurred anguish in this life and the retribution in the life yet to come is far worse. Nothing can protect them against God's ordinance.

[13:35] The allegory of Heaven which is promised for the righteous, is flowing streams, inexhaustible provisions and cool shade. Such is the future for those who observe good works while the end for the disbelievers is being surrounded by a fiery hell.
[13:36] Those who received the scripture rejoice in what was revealed to you, while some others may reject parts of it. Say: "I am simply commanded to serve God and never set up any authority to rival or rank with Him. I invite you to Him and to Him is my ultimate return."
[13:37] We revealed these laws in Arabic and if you ever concede to their wishes, after this knowledge has come to you, you will have no ally nor a protector against God.[458]
[13:38] We have sent messengers before you and We made them husbands with wives and children. No messenger can produce a sign to prove something without God's authorisation. For everything there is a time prescribed.

MESSENGER'S SOLE MISSION TO DELIVER THE MESSAGE

[13:39] God erases and establishes only in consistence with His ordinance. And it is He who has made everything consistent and with Him is the source of all ordinance.
[13:40] Whether We show you what We promise them or terminate your life before that, your sole mission is to deliver this complete message. It is We who will call them to account.
[13:41] Do they not see that every day on earth brings them closer to the end and that their life span is irrevocably determined by God's ordinance? He is the most efficient Reckoner.
[13:42] Others before them have schemed but to God belongs the ultimate planning. He knows what each individual has earned. The disbelievers will find out who the ultimate winners are.
[13:43] Those who disbelieve say, "You are not a messenger from God." Say: "God suffices as a witness between me and you and those who possess knowledge of this scripture."[459]

[458] **God's way:** method, practice, modus operandi. (Arabic: *sunnatullah*) God's system is constant and does not change. Everything happens in accordance with His fixed laws. See verses 17:73; 33:62.
[459] **The messenger's** sole mission is to deliver the Quran and the Quran alone. God suffices as witness to His messenger. See verses: 4:79; 63;1 and also 3:20. **Profound message**: 7:75.

Sura 14: Abraham (Ibrahim)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[14:1] A.L.R. A guidance that We revealed to you in order to lead people out of darkness into the light, that is consistent with the ordinance of the One who sustains them, to the path of the Almighty, the One worthy of all praise.
[14:2] God: the One to whom belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth. Wretched are the disbelievers. They have incurred a terrible retribution.
[14:3] They are the ones who give priority to this life over the permanent life yet to come, repel others from the path of God and seek to make it crooked, they have gone far astray.
[14:4] We did not send any messenger except to teach in the language of his people in order to make Our guidance clear for them. Some then repelled it in accordance with the ordinance of God, and others are guided by it in accordance with the ordinance of God. He is the Almighty, the Most Wise.

PARENTS BLINDLY FOLLOWED: A GREAT HUMAN TRAGEDY

[14:5] Thus, We sent Moses with Our guidance, saying, "Lead your people out of darkness into the light and remind them of the days of prosperity from God." These are lessons for every steadfast and appreciative person.
[14:6] Recall that Moses said to his people, "Remember God's blessings upon you. He saved you from Firawn's people who inflicted a dreadful persecution upon you: slaughtering your sons and defiling your women. That was an exacting trial from your Sustainer."[460]
[14:7] Your Sustainer has decreed: "When you appreciate the good things in life, the more good things you will attract." But if you turn unappreciative, then retribution, consistent with My ordinance, is severe.
[14:8] Moses said, "If you disbelieve along with all the people on earth, God is in no need of anything and remains worthy of all praise."
[14:9] Have you not heard about those before you, the people of Noah, Aad, Thamoud and others who came after them and now known only to God? The messengers went to them with clear guidance, but they treated them with contempt and said, "We disbelieve in what you are sent with. We are sceptical about your guidance and full of doubt."
[14:10] Their messengers said, "Do you have doubts about God, the initiator of the heavens and the earth? He invites you only to protect you from your wrongdoing and to give you another chance to redeem

[460] **Following** your parents blindly is one of the greatest human tragedies. Not long after your birth, they decide your name, nationality, religion and sect. And you spend the rest of your life defending something you did not even choose. See verse 37:74.

yourselves." They said, "You are no more than humans like us, who want to repel us from those our parents serve. Show us some profound authority."
[14:11] Their messengers said to them, "We are no more than humans like you, but God exalts according to His ordinance from among His servants.[461] We could not possibly show you any kind of endorsement, except in accordance with God's ordinance. In God's revelation the believers shall trust.[462]
[14:12] "Why should we not trust in God, when He has guided us in the right path? We will steadfastly persevere in the face of your persecution. In God all those who have conviction shall put their trust."
[14:13] Those who disbelieved said to their messengers, "We will banish you from our land unless you revert to our religion." Their Sustainer inspired them: "We will inevitably annihilate the transgressors.
[14:14] "And We will let you dwell in their land after them. This is the reward for those who reverence My majesty and reverence My promise."
[14:15] They issued a challenge to them and consequently every stubborn would-be king ended up ruined.
[14:16] Awaiting for them is a hell of their own making, wherein they will drink rancid water.
[14:17] They will gulp it down though they cannot stand it, as death comes to them from every direction, but they will never die. Awaiting them is a harsh and painful reality.
[14:18] The allegory of those who disbelieve in the One who sustains them: their works are like ashes in a violent wind on a stormy day. They gain nothing from whatever they earn. Such are those who have strayed the furthest.

SERVE GOD: THE ONE WHO SUSTAINS YOU

[14:19] Do you not realise that God has created the heavens and the earth for a specific purpose? If He wills, He can remove you and substitute a new creation in your place.
[14:20] This is not too difficult for God.
[14:21] When they all stand before God, the disgraced followers will say to the arrogant leaders, "We used to follow you. Can you save us from God's punishment?" They will say, "Had we accepted God's guidance according to His ordinance, we would have guided you. Now it is too late, whether we grieve or resign to endure this, there is no way out for us."

[461] **Faith:** following parents blindly, a great human tragedy. See verse and footnote 64:18.
[462] **When this Deen,** the Social Order in the Quran, is viewed impartially, then the proof and authority becomes apparent. See verse 4:82; 68:37.

EGO: THE HUMAN BEING'S DESTRUCTIVE SIDE

[14:22] And shaitan, the egotistical aspect, will say after the judgment has been issued, "God promised you the truthful promise and I promised you too, but I broke my promise. In reality I had no power over you. I simply invited you and you accepted my invitation. Therefore, do not blame me and blame only yourselves. My complaining cannot help you, nor can your complaining help me. I disbelieved in your delusions of power. Indeed, the transgressors have incurred a painful punishment."[463]

[14:23] As for those who believe and lead a righteous life, they will be admitted into gardens watered with flowing streams. They abide therein forever, in accordance with the ordinance of their Sustainer. Their greeting therein is: "Salamun: Peace."[464]

GUIDANCE: PART OF GOD'S ORDINANCE

[14:24] Do you not see that God sets forth the example of a good word as a good tree whose root is firmly fixed and its branches are high in the sky?

[14:25] It produces its crop every season as designed by its Sustainer. God thus advances the examples for all mankind that they may take heed.

[14:26] And the example of the bad word is that of a bad tree chopped at the soil level, it has no roots to keep it standing.

[14:27] God strengthens those who believe with His words of guidance, in this life and in the life to come. And the corrupt go astray, consistent with God's ordinance. Everything that happens is in accordance with God's ordinance, laws that are unfailing and true.

REJECTERS INFLICT SUFFERING ON THEIR FAMILIES

[14:28] Have you noted those who responded to God's blessings by rejecting the guidance and thus brought disaster upon their own families?

[14:29] They are committed to a life a turmoil and a hell, where they burn. What a miserable end.

[14:30] They set up authority to rival God and to divert others from His path. Say: "Enjoy this for a while. Your final end is a hell of your own making."

[14:31] Exhort My servants who believe to observe their commitments and to spend for the good of social welfare from Our provisions to them,

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[463] **Shaitan is** the 'free will' aspect of the human Self and conscience, antagonistic to the better side. While influenced and drawn to this destructive way, an individual is not compelled to follow it. A person has to strengthen his will to defeat this satanic ego element within his Self. This verse shows the remorse, after judgement has taken place, the individual now feels at having been influenced and succumbed to his Ego: the negative aspect of his Self. See verses 6:137; 7:200-201; 20:29; 67:6-11.

[464] **Peace:** (Arabic: *salamun*). Greeting approved by God. See verse and footnote 6:54.

privately and publicly, before a day comes where there is neither trade-off, nor nepotism.[465]
[14:32] God is the One who created the heavens and the earth and He sends down from the sky water to produce all kinds of fruit for your sustenance. He has enabled the ships to serve you on the sea in accordance with His ordinance. He has also made the rivers to serve you.
[14:33] He has obliged the sun and the moon in your service, continuously. He has created the night and the day to serve you.
[14:34] And He gives you all kinds of things that you implore Him for. If you count all the favours bestowed on you by God, you can never encompass them. Indeed, the human being is transgressing and unappreciative.

ABRAHAM SEEKS PROTECTION

[14:35] Recall that Abraham said, "My Sustainer, make this a peaceful country and protect me and my children from serving any authority as equal to You.[466]
[14:36] "My Sustainer, they have misled so many people. As for those who follow me, they belong with me. As for those who disobey me, You are the Protector and the Most Merciful.
[14:37] "Our Sustainer, I have settled part of my family in this barren valley and live according to the sanctions of Your System. Our Sustainer strengthen us to uphold our commitments and let many people unite with us, enjoy all kinds of good things and that they may be appreciative.

POWER OF UPHOLDING COMMITMENTS: SUPPLICATIONS ANSWERED

[14:38] "Our Sustainer, You know whatever we conceal and whatever we declare, nothing is hidden from You on earth nor in the heavens.
[14:39] "Praise be to God for granting me, despite my old age, Ismail and Isaac. My Sustainer is the One who hears all supplications.
[14:40] "My Sustainer, help me to consistently observe my commitments and also my children to do the same. Our Sustainer, You are the One who accepts our supplications.
[14:41] "My Sustainer, protect me and my parents and the believers on the day when the reckoning takes place."

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[465] **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verses and footnotes 2:3; 2:215 .
[466] **To serve** anyone or anything as equal to God is shirk, high treason. This means to accept any laws, traditions or customs that conflict with the decrees in the Quran. This includes to follow leaders who take you, along with themselves, on the path of destruction. See verses and footnotes 12:106; 9:1-10.

CORRUPT PEOPLE CONSPIRE EVIL

[14:42] Do not ever think that God is unaware of what the transgressors are doing. He only respites them until a day when their eyes, realising the truth, will stare in horror.

[14:43] As they rush out, their faces will be looking upward, their eyes will not even blink and their minds will be horrified.

[14:44] You shall warn the people of the day when the retribution comes to them. Those who transgressed will say, "Our Sustainer, give us one more respite. We will then respond to Your call and follow the messengers." Did you not swear in the past that you will last forever?[467]

[14:45] You dwelled in the homes of those before you, who wronged their Self and you have seen clearly what We did to them. We have set many precedents for you.

[14:46] They plot and they plan and God is fully aware of their schemes. Indeed, their conspiracies are sufficient to erase mountains.

[14:47] Do not think that God will ever break His promise to His messengers. God is powerful, able and competent to mete out punishment to these criminals.

AFTER DESTRUCTION A NEW CREATION

[14:48] The day will come when this earth will be substituted with a different world and the heavens will be substituted for something new and everyone will be brought before God, the One, the Supreme.

[14:49] And you will see the guilty on that day as chained in shackles.

[14:50] Their clothes will be like tar and fire will overwhelm their faces.

[14:51] For God will pay each Self for whatever it earned. God is the most efficient Reckoner.

[14:52] This is a complete message for all people to be warned herewith and to let them know that He is the One God and that God is only One, and for those who possess intelligence to take heed.

[467] Call: invite, ask, petition, summon, invoke, supplicate. (Arabic: *Dua.* Irregular Root: D'A. Derivatives: *du'wani, dawa, duwa, da'wataka, uduw'ila, ud'aw*). God responds to supplications: 2:186. Responding to God's call: 14:44. Invite to your sustainer: 16:125. Those with affected deafness cannot hear the call: 21:45. God says call on me and I will answer your call: 40:60. See verse and footnote 2:3. Invite to God: 12:108; 41:33. See also verse 3:38.

Sura 15: The Valley (Al-Hijr)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[15:1] A.L.R. These are the signs of this profound Quran, a book that makes things clear.[468]
[15:2] Certainly, those who disbelieve now will wish they had accepted this guidance.
[15:3] Let them eat, drink and enjoy this life and remain deluded by wishful thinking. They will find out the reality.
[15:4] We never annihilated any community, except after a specific period, in accordance with Our ordinance.[469]
[15:5] The end of any community can never be advanced, nor delayed.
[15:6] They said, "O you who received this reminder, you are possessed.
[15:7] "Why do you not bring down a malaika, if you are truthful?"
[15:8] We do not send down the malaika except for a specific purpose. Otherwise, no one would have been given respite.

QURAN: A PROTECTED AND PRESERVED GUIDANCE

[15:9] We have revealed this consummate reminder and absolutely We will safeguard it.
[15:10] We have sent messengers before you to the communities in the past.
[15:11] When a messenger went to them, they ridiculed him.
[15:12] The minds of the guilty thus deteriorate, according to the ordinance of God.
[15:13] Consequently, they did not believe in him. This has been the way of people since the past generations.
[15:14] Even if We opened for them a gate to the stars, through which they climb,
[15:15] they will still say, "Our eyes have been bewitched. A spell has been cast on us."
[15:16] We placed galaxies in the sky and have made them beautiful for the beholders.
[15:17] And We guarded them against every unwanted and malicious element.
[15:18] If anything detrimental creeps near, a mighty projectile ensures its hasty repulsion.
[15:19] As for the earth, We constructed it and placed on it stabilising mountains and We caused it to be a perfect balance.

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[468] **A.L.R.** There are many chapters that start with initials like this. See verse and footnote 2:1. **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verse and footnote 2:185.
[469] **No community** is destroyed except after an opportunity to reform and follow the guidance from God.

[15:20] We made it habitable for you and for creatures that you do not provide for.[470]
[15:21] There is nothing that We do not own infinite amounts thereof. But We send it down in precise measure.
[15:22] And We send the seeding winds to cause water to come down from the sky for you to drink. Otherwise you could not keep it fresh.[471]
[15:23] It is We who control life and death and We are the ultimate inheritors of everything.
[15:24] And We fully know those among you who advance the results of good deeds for their own progress and We fully know those who send forth the bad things that cause them to regress.
[15:25] Your Sustainer will surely summon them all. He is Most Wise and aware of all things.

CREATION OF HUMAN BEINGS

[15:26] We created the human being from a particular type of clay.[472]
[15:27] As for some beings that are not apparent, We created them before that from a blazing fire-like substance.
[15:28] Your Sustainer said to the malaika, "I am creating a human being from a certain kind of clay.
[15:29] "Once I perfect him and direct him from My Ruh, you shall concede before him."[473]
[15:30] The malaika yielded themselves, all of them,
[15:31] except Iblees, the egotistic Self. He refused to be with those who surrendered themselves to mankind.
[15:32] God said, "O Iblees, why are you not with those who consented?"
[15:33] He said, "I will not yield before a human being, whom You created from clay."
[15:34] God said, "Therefore you are now decreed an invisible aspect, and you are displaced from this harmony.
[15:35] "You have incurred My condemnation for the period of this established Order."
[15:36] He said, "My Sustainer, respite me until the day they are resurrected."

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[470] **God created** the earth and it now has billions of creatures. All are provided with measured quantities of food, water and other necessities. Whether the Human race can manage this vast and resourceful planet is up to them. As it is often said, there is enough for everyone's need, but not enough for anyone's greed.
[471] **Cloud seeding** by use of chemicals is a means to trigger rain. Nature too uses material such as sea salt and land dust to seed the clouds to trigger rain. Here this process is described with great accuracy.
[472] **Origin of life:** See verses and footnotes 3:59; 36:82.
[473] **Ruh** is the directive energy *from* God, but not *of* God. See verse 4:171. Everything in the heavens and the earth is in the service of mankind. See verses and footnotes 18:50; 31:20.

[15:37] God said, "You are respited.
[15:38] "Until the specified day and time."
[15:39] He said, "My Sustainer, since I am displaced according to your ordinance, I will surely entice them on earth and I will send them all astray.
[15:40] "Except those who serve you and devote their service absolutely to You alone."
[15:41] God said, "This is a law that is inviolable.
[15:42] "You have no power over My servants. You only have power over the drifters who follow you.[474]
[15:43] "And the turmoil of a hell awaits them all.
[15:44] "It will have seven gates. Each gate will get a specific share of them."
[15:45] As for the righteous, they will enjoy harmony and tranquillity.
[15:46] Enter therein, peaceful and secure.
[15:47] We remove all jealousy from their hearts. Like one family, they will be together in pleasant surrounding.
[15:48] Never will they suffer any fatigue therein, never will they be evicted from there.
[15:49] Inform My servants that I am their Protector and the Most Merciful.
[15:50] And that My retribution is the most painful punishment.

ABRAHAM & LOT

[15:51] Here is the event concerning Abraham's guests.
[15:52] When they entered his room, they said, "Salamun: Peace." He said, "We are apprehensive about you."[475]
[15:53] They said, "Do not be afraid. We have good news for you of an enlightened son."
[15:54] He said, "How can you give me such good news, when I am so old? Do you still give me this good news?"
[15:55] They said, "The good news we give you is true so do not despair."
[15:56] He said, "None despairs of his Sustainer's mercy, except those who have strayed."
[15:57] He said, "What is your mission, O messengers?"
[15:58] They said, "We are being dispatched to some guilty people.
[15:59] "As for Lot's family, we will save them all.

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[474] **A drifter** can best be defined by saying that people who think for themselves never drift, while those who do little or no thinking for themselves are drifters. A drifter is one who permits himself to be influenced and controlled by circumstances outside of his own mind. He would rather let others occupy his mind and do his thinking than go to the trouble of thinking for himself. A drifter is one who accepts whatever life throws in his way without making a protest or putting up a fight. He doesn't know what he wants from life and spends all of his time getting just that. A drifter has lots of opinions, but they are not his own. A drifter is one who is too lazy mentally to use his own brain. That is the reason Iblees or shaitan (the egotistical aspect of the Self) can take control of people's thinking and plant detrimental ideas in their minds. See verse 6:77.

[475] **Peace** (Arabic*: salamun*). Greetings of peace. See verse and footnote 6:54.

[15:60] "But not his wife, she is destined to be with the doomed."
[15:61] The messengers went to Lot's town.
[15:62] He said, "You are unknown people."
[15:63] They said, "We bring to you what they have been doubting.
[15:64] "We bring to you a certainty of events, and we are truthful.
[15:65] "You shall take your family during the night. Stay behind them and do not look back on this life. Go where you are commanded."
[15:66] We delivered to him this command: those people are to be annihilated in the morning.
[15:67] Some people from the city came joyfully.
[15:68] He said, "These are my guests, do not embarrass me.
[15:69] "Fear God and do not shame me."
[15:70] They said, "Did we not instruct you not to speak to anyone?"
[15:71] He said, "Take these women, if you must."
[15:72] By their life, they were totally blinded by their lust.[476]
[15:73] Consequently, the disaster struck them in the morning.
[15:74] Life was turned upside down and We showered the town with a torrent of hard, shattering rocks.
[15:75] This is a lesson for those who possess intelligence.
[15:76] Events will always unfold according to the Ordinance of God. This is God's unchanging way: the Law of Requital.
[15:77] In the conduct of these affairs, there are signs for the believers.

THOSE WHO REJECT THIS GUIDANCE

[15:78] Two groups of people lived in a forest and they also transgressed the limits of guidance.
[15:79] Consequently, We punished them and both communities were prominent in their time.
[15:80] The people of Al-Hijr disbelieved in the messengers.
[15:81] We gave them Our guidance, but they disregarded it.
[15:82] They used to carve secure homes out of the mountains.
[15:83] The disaster hit them in the morning.
[15:84] What they had hoarded did not help them.

SOME ACCEPT THE QURAN ONLY PARTIALLY

[15:85] We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them, except for a specific purpose. The end of the world will come, so you may disregard some lapse in their belief.
[15:86] Your Sustainer is the creator and is the knower of all things.
[15:87] We have given you many signs and a profound Quran.[477]

[476] **Life:** to prosper, sustain, cultivate or flourish (Arabic: *Amr* root M'R). See verse and footnote 9:18.

[15:88] Do not be jealous of what We bestowed upon the other messengers and do not be saddened by those who reject this guidance and show kindness towards those who believe.
[15:89] And proclaim: "I am a manifest warner."
[15:90] We will deal with those who divide communities.
[15:91] They accept the Quran only partially.[478]

[15:92] By your Sustainer, we will question them all,
[15:93] about everything they have done.
[15:94] Therefore, carry out the mission given to you and disregard those who set up authorities to rival God.[479]
[15:95] We will shield you from those who taunt you,
[15:96] who set up other authorities to equal God. They will surely find out.
[15:97] We know full well that you may be exasperated by what they say.
[15:98] You shall pay tribute to the attributes of your Sustainer and be with those who concede wholly to Him.
[15:99] And serve your Sustainer in order to attain true conviction.

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[477] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R).The majority of people, despite the Quran being clear, complete and detailed seek explanations from their imams who refer to historical traditions for their interpretations. In reality they know the Quran only partially to include in their ritual prayers. See verses and footnotes 15:91 & 2:185.

[478] **The vast majority** of those who profess to be muslims do so but in reality they apply laws other than those in the Quran. This in effect means that they have rejected the teachings of the Quran while believing they have not done so. See verse 3:23-24.

[479] **Blasphemy:** The action or offence of speaking sacrilegiously about God or sacred things; profane talk. The most heinous crime is treachery, the accepting of an authority other than the one that rules over you. Since God is sovereign supreme, to accept an authority to rank or equal with God is high treason. (Arabic: *shirk.* Root: SH'R'K. Derivatives: mushrik, mushikreen). However, professed Muslims ignore this and consider the malignment (perceived or otherwise) of Muhammad a greater offence. this is why the majority do not object if anybody abuses, mocks and slanders God, as they give more importance to the Messenger than to God. This is in fact shirk. It is also shirk to accept guidance that is in conflict with the Quran, as the Quran is God's sovereign law and to set it aside is a grievous offence. **The Quran informs** the reader that the Messenger was mocked, ridiculed like the messengers before him (13:32; 15:11; 21:41; 37:12). He was called a fabricator, forger, a liar (16:101; 25:4), a man who was fanatical and bewitched (17:47; 25:8), that he was a crazy poet (37:36). Insults were even hurled at the Quran, in that it was called 'hallucinations' (21:5), 'foreign source, eccentric' (16:103), a deception, a forgery (38:7) and tales from the past (25:5). In the Quran even God does not decree the death penalty for profanities against Him. (7.180). However, professed Muslims are eager to kill anyone who they perceive to have offended them or the messenger. This is at odds with the Quran's message of tolerance. See verses: Trinity: 4:171. Blasphemy, a grievous offence (4.48) but no death penalty for **apostates**, a word not found in the Quran.

Sura 16: The Bee (Al-Nahl)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[16:1] God's commands are already in progress and everything is being recorded, so do not try to be hasty about it. Be He glorified, the Most High, far above any authority they set up as equal to Him.
[16:2] He sends down the malaika with the revelations carrying His commands to whomever He chooses from among His servants: "You shall teach that there is no other authority to rank with Me. You shall fulfil your duty to Me."
[16:3] He created the heavens and the earth for a specific purpose. He is much too high and far above any authority they set up as equal to Him.
[16:4] He created the human from a small drop, who then turns into an ardent antagonist.
[16:5] And He created the livestock for you, to provide you with warmth and many other benefits, as well as food.
[16:6] They also provide you with luxury during your leisure and when you travel.
[16:7] And they carry your loads to lands that you could not reach without great hardship. Surely, your Sustainer is compassionate, Most Merciful.
[16:8] And He created horses, mules and donkeys to help you work and for you to ride for pleasure. Additionally, He creates what you do not know.

[16:9] God shows you various paths, including the ones not to follow. If He willed, He could have guided all of you.
[16:10] He sends down from the sky water for you to drink and to grow trees to be useful for you.
[16:11] The water, according to His ordinance, helps grow for you crops, olives, date palms, grapes and all kinds of fruits. In these things there is sufficient proof for people who search and think.
[16:12] And He commits in your service the night and the day, as well as the sun and the moon. Also the stars adhere to their paths by His ordinance. In these things there is sufficient proof for people who understand.
[16:13] And He created for you on earth many objects of various colours. In these there is sufficient proof for people who take heed.
[16:14] And He expanded the sea to serve you. You eat from it tender meat and extract jewellery which you wear. And you see the ships sailing on it for your commercial benefits, as you seek His bounties, that you may be appreciative.
[16:15] And He placed stabilising mountains on earth for balance lest it move with you, as well as rivers and roads, that you may be guided by them through the land.

[16:16] And landmarks as well as the stars to be used for navigation.
[16:17] Is the One who creates like the one who does not create? Would you now take heed?
[16:18] If you count God's blessings you cannot possibly encompass them all. God is Protector, Most Merciful.
[16:19] And God knows whatever you conceal and whatever you declare.

MESSENGERS, SAINTS AND ANCESTORS WORSHIPED

[16:20] As for the authorities they set up to rank with God, they do not create anything, they themselves were created.
[16:21] They are dead, not alive, and they have no idea how or when they will be resurrected.
[16:22] Your God is the One God. As for those who do not believe in the life yet to come, they deny and refuse to know and they are arrogant.
[16:23] Absolutely, God knows everything they conceal and everything they declare. He does not care for those who are arrogant.
[16:24] When they are asked, "What do you think of this guidance from your Sustainer," they say, "These are nothing but stories from the past."
[16:25] They will be held responsible for their wrongdoing on the Day of Reckoning, all of them. In addition to the wrongs they have done, they misled many by their ignorance. What a miserable burden they have.[480]
[16:26] Others like them have schemed in the past and consequently, God destroyed their buildings at the foundation, causing the roofs to fall in on them. The retribution struck them when they least expected.
[16:27] Then, on the Day of Resurrection, He will disgrace them and ask: "Where are the authorities that you had set up as rival partners with Me and had opposed Me for their sake?" Those blessed with knowledge will say, "Today shame and misery has befallen on the disbelievers."

THE DISBELIEVERS: CONTINUOUS GRIEF

[16:28] When the malaika put them to death in a state of wronging their Self, that is when they finally submit and say, "We did not do anything wrong!" Yes, indeed. God is fully aware of everything you have done.
[16:29] Therefore, enter into a state of hell from where there is no exit. What a miserable future for the arrogant ones.

BELIEVERS: A STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY

[16:30] As for the righteous, when they are asked, "What do you think of this guidance from your Sustainer," they say, "Life transforming." For those

[480] **Those who are** not familiar with the Quran, while professing to believe in it follow other contrived doctrines, and not only do wrong but also mislead others out of ignorance. See verses and footnotes 48:25; 68:37.

who lead a life of good works, happiness and the abode of the life yet to come is even better. What a peaceful future for the righteous.
[16:31] The gardens of peace are reserved for them, wherein rivers flow and they have anything they wish for. God thus rewards the righteous.
[16:32] The malaika terminate their lives in a state of righteousness, saying, "Salamun Alaikum: Peace be upon you. Enter a state of peace now as a reward for your works."[481]
[16:33] Are the disbelievers waiting for the malaika to come to them or until your Sustainer's judgment comes to pass? Those before them did the same thing. God is not the One who wronged them, they are the ones who wronged their own Self.
[16:34] They have incurred the consequences of their evil works and the very things they ridiculed came back to torment them.

FOLLOW GOD'S MESSAGE DELIVERED BY MESSENGERS

[16:35] Those who set up authority to rival God say, "Had God willed, we would not follow any authority other than Him nor would our parents. Nor would we prohibit anything besides His prohibitions." Those before them have done the same. The messengers duty is nothing but to deliver the complete clear message.
[16:36] We have sent messengers to every community, saying, "You shall serve God and avoid following any authority that conflicts with God's guidance." Subsequently, some were guided in accordance with God's ordinance, while others remained committed to straying. Travel the earth and note the consequences for those who rejected His guidance.
[16:37] No matter how hard you try to guide them, those devoted to drifting, do so in accordance with the ordinance of God. Thus, no one can help them.[482]
[16:38] They swore solemnly by God: "God will not resurrect the dead." Absolutely, God will resurrect the dead, such is His inviolable promise but most people do not know.[483]
[16:39] He will then point out to everyone all the things they had disputed and will let those who disbelieved know that they were liars.
[16:40] To have anything done, We simply say to it, "Be," and it is.
[16:41] Those who faced challenges for the sake of God, because they were persecuted, We will surely make it up to them generously in this life and the recompense of the life yet to come is even greater, if only they knew.

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[481] **Peace be upon you.** (Arabic*: salamun alaikum*). Greetings of peace. See verse and footnote 6:54.
[482] **Those who** choose to reject God's guidance will find it easier to drift, despite the consequences. Belief combined by action shows conviction and strengthens the Self, but is much more difficult. See verse and footnote 7:132.
[483] **Complete** (Arabic: *balaghata.* Root B'L'GH). Clear (Arabic: *mubeen.* Root B'N). See verse and footnote 46:35. See footnote 46:35.

[16:42] This is because they steadfastly persevere and in the One who sustains them, they put their trust.
[16:43] We did not send messengers before you except men whom We inspired. Ask those who know the scripture, if you do not know.
[16:44] We provided them with lucid guidance, reliable and truthful. And We sent down to you this message to make clear to all the people everything that is sent down to them, with this reminder perhaps they will reflect.

[16:45] Do those who design evil schemes guarantee that God will not cause the earth to swallow them or that the retribution will not come to them when they least expect it?
[16:46] It may strike them while they are asleep, and they can never escape.
[16:47] Or it may strike them while they are fearfully expecting it. Your Sustainer is compassionate, Most Merciful.
[16:48] Have they not seen all the things created by God? Their shadows surround them right and left in total submission to God, and do so willingly.
[16:49] To God's ordinance concedes everything in the heavens and everything on earth, every creature and so do the malaika, without the least arrogance.
[16:50] They reverence their Sustainer, high above them and they do as they are commanded.

IMPOSSIBLE TO FOLLOW TWO CONFLICTING LAWS

[16:51] God has proclaimed: "Do not choose two authorities, there is only the One God that you are accountable to. You shall reverence and serve Me alone."[484]
[16:52] To Him belongs everything in the heavens and the earth and therefore, this Deen-Islam, the Social Order, shall be devoted absolutely to Him alone. Would you serve any other than God?
[16:53] Anything you enjoy is from God. Yet, whenever you incur any adversity you immediately complain to Him.
[16:54] And, as soon as He relieves your affliction, some of you revert to praising an authority as equal to God.
[16:55] Let them disbelieve in what We have given them. Go ahead and enjoy it temporarily, you will surely find out.
[16:56] They designate for the authority they set up out of ignorance, a share of the provisions We bestow upon them. By God, you will be held accountable for your innovations.[485]

[484] **It is impossible** to serve two authorities at the same time and to follow conflicting sets of guidance. So to follow the Quran and other conflicting books of traditions is committing 'shirk'; treachery and an unforgivable offence. See verses 68:34-41. **Trinity:** see verse and footnote 4:171.

BIAS AGAINST GIRLS TOTALLY IMMORAL

[16:57] They even assign daughters to God, be He glorified, while they prefer for themselves what they like.
[16:58] When one of them fathers a girl, his face becomes darkened with overwhelming grief.
[16:59] Ashamed, he hides from his people, because of the news given to him. He even ponders: should he keep the child grudgingly or bury her in the ground. Miserable indeed is their decision.
[16:60] Those who do not believe in the life yet to come set the worst examples, while to God belongs the most sublime examples. He is the Almighty, the Most Wise.

[16:61] If God punished instantaneously all the people for their transgressions, He would have annihilated every creature on earth. But He respites them for a specific time in accordance with His ordinance. Once their interim ends, they cannot delay it by one hour nor advance it.
[16:62] They ascribe to God what they dislike for themselves, then utter lies with their own tongues that they are righteous. Without any doubt, they have incurred lasting torment and are abandoned to suffer it forever.
[16:63] God sent messengers to other communities before you, but their evil deeds seemed fair work in their own eyes. Consequently, the satanic egotistic elements now determine their lives and they have incurred a painful retribution.
[16:64] We have revealed this guidance to point out for them what they dispute and to provide direction and mercy for people who believe.

PROVISIONS FROM GOD

[16:65] God sends down from the sky water to revive the land after it has become barren and died. In these should be sufficient proof for people who hear.[486]
[16:66] And in the livestock there is a lesson for you: We provide you with a drink from their bodies. From the midst of digested food and blood, you get pure milk, delicious for the drinkers.
[16:67] And from the fruits of date palms and grapes you produce drinks that are soft and those that are strong, as well as good provisions. In these should be sufficient proof for people who understand.[487]

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[485] **Consecrating food** or other gifts to priests, deities etc. is not only shirk, but forbidden for consumption. See verses and footnote 6:145; 9:1-10.
[486] **Why does God** allow the land to become barren and dry? God sends down everything in precise measure [Verse 15:21], to balance nature according to His ordinance.
[487] **What are the** 'strong drinks' made from dates and grapes? These are of course wines and spirits produced from these versatile fruits. This verse begs the question, if indeed God forbids the use of alcohol then why does He not forbid the making of it too? The word alcohol is not

[16:68] And your Sustainer inspired the bee to build homes in the mountains and the trees and in the hives that they construct.[488]
[16:69] Then they consume from all the fruits, instinctively following the direction of your Sustainer, precisely. From their bellies comes honey of different hues, wherein there are benefits for people. In this should be sufficient proof for those who reflect.[489]
[16:70] God created you, then He terminates your lives. According to His ordinance some of you live to a great age, only to find out that there is a limit to the knowledge they can acquire. God is aware of all things and is All-powerful.

NONE EQUAL WITH GOD

[16:71] God has provided for some of you more than others. Those who are given plenty would never give their properties to their servants to the extent of making them as equals. Would they give up God's blessings?
[16:72] And God made for you wives from among yourselves and produced from them your children and grandchildren, and provided you with good provisions. Should they believe in falsehood and turn unappreciative of God's blessings?
[16:73] Yet, they set up authorities to rival God who possess no provisions in the heavens or on the earth, nor can they provide them with anything.
[16:74] Therefore, do not cite examples for God. God knows while you do not know.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PEOPLE

[16:75] God sets forth the example of a slave who is owned and is totally powerless compared to the servant whom We set apart with good provisions from which he spends for the good of society, privately and publicly. Are they equal? Praise be to God, most of them do not know.
[16:76] And God cites another example of two men: one is frivolous, lacks perception and is totally dependent on his master, whichever way he

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mentioned in the Quran, but '*alcohol*' is a word of Arabic origin, and had God specifically wanted to forbid this (decree it to be *haram*) then He would have done so, but no such decree is found in the Quran. See verses and footnotes 2:219; 4:43; 5:90; 12:36; 12:41; 12:49; 47:15. When God restricts or forbids something He uses the word *haram.* See verses 7:33; 10:59; 16:115-116.

[488] **God's guidance** to the physical world and the animal world is directed through laws and instincts: fire burns, fish swim, lions eat meat, and bees make honey. The human body is subject to the same physical laws as other animals: breathing, eating, reproduction etc. However, the human Self is shown guidance indirectly by revelation received through messengers. This is because Man is bestowed with a measure of 'free will' that entitles him to develop his Self through choice rather than compulsion: a choice which He alone makes. See verse 32:13.

[489] **The verb** in the original Arabic that refer to the honey producing worker bees show that they are females, this is now an established fact, and the small number of males (drones) who only serve to fertilize the queen are expelled from the hive in Autumn. Verse 6:38 accurately informs that all creatures live as communities - another fact corroborated by modern science. See verse 13:3.

directs him, he cannot produce anything good. Is he equal to one who applies justice and is guided in the right path?

GOD'S GIFTS ALL AROUND US

[16:77] To God belongs the future of the heavens and the earth. As far as He is concerned, the end of the world is a blink of an eye away or even closer. God is All-powerful.
[16:78] God brought you out of your mothers' wombs knowing nothing and He gave you the hearing, the eyesight and the insight that you may be appreciative.
[16:79] Do you not see the birds flying in the sky? None holds them up in mid-air except God's ordinance. In this should be sufficient signs for people who believe.
[16:80] And God provided for you homes where you can live. And He provided for you tents made from the hides of livestock, so you can carry them when you travel and use them when you settle down. And from their wool, fur and hair, you make clothing that gives you comfort.

MESSENGER'S MISSION: DELIVER THE MESSAGE

[16:81] And God provided for you shade through things which He created and provided for you shelters in the mountains and provided for you garments that protect you from heat and armour that protects you when you fight in wars. He thus perfects His favours upon you, that you may submit to this guidance.
[16:82] If they still turn away, then your sole mission is the delivery of the complete clear message.
[16:83] They fully recognise God's blessings, then deny them. The majority of them reject this guidance.
[16:84] The day will come when We raise from every community a witness, then those who disbelieved will not be permitted to offer excuses nor will they be allowed to make amends.
[16:85] Once those who transgressed see the retribution, it will be too late. It will not be commuted for them nor will there be any respite.

THE FOLLOWED DISOWN THEIR FOLLOWERS

[16:86] And when those who set up authorities to rival God will see their idols and will say, "Our Sustainer, these are the authorities we set up beside You." Their idols will then confront them and say, "You are liars."[490]
[16:87] They will totally submit to God on that day and the authorities they had invented will disown them.

[490] **People follow saints** and other religious leaders thinking that they will bring them closer to God, but this is their delusion and they will suffer for it. See verse 39:3.

[16:88] Those who disbelieve and repel others from the path of God, We augment their retribution by intensifying it, due to their transgressions.
[16:89] The day will come when We will summon from every community a witness from among themselves to testify against his people. We have revealed to you this book to provide explanations for everything relevant and guidance and mercy and good news for those who submit.[491]
[16:90] God advocates justice, spending for the good of society and helping your relatives. And He forbids evil, vice and transgression. He enlightens you, that you may take heed.

DO NOT BE DECEPTIVE

[16:91] You shall fulfil your promise with God when you make such a covenant. You shall not violate your oaths after swearing by God to carry them out, for you have made God a guarantor for you. God knows everything you do.
[16:92] Do not be like the knitter who unravels her good knitting into piles of tangled yarn. This is your example if you resort to false oaths to deceive and take advantage of one another. Your actions distinguish you from other communities, God thus puts you to the test. He will surely show you on the Day of Resurrection everything you had disputed.
[16:93] Had God willed, He could have made you one community. But whoever chooses to go astray, remains astray by God's ordinance and those who seek guidance are directed to guidance according to His ordinance. You will surely expose everything you have done.

KEEP YOUR PROMISES

[16:94] Do not abuse the oaths among you lest you slide back after having a strong foothold, then you incur misery. Such is the consequence of repelling others from the path of God by setting a bad example, then you incur a terrible retribution.
[16:95] Do not undervalue your sworn statements before God. What God possesses is far better for you, if only you knew.
[16:96] What you possess is subject to limits, but what God possesses is eternal. We will surely reward those who steadfastly persevere. We will recompense them for their good works.
[16:97] Anyone who does good works, male or female, while believing in accountability to God, We will surely grant them a superior life in this world and We will surely pay them their full recompense on the Day of Reckoning for all the good things they have done.[492]

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[491] **Witness:** a person who sees an event, typically a crime or accident, take place. Such witnesses will testify on the day of Accountability. See verses 4:41; 28:75.
[492] **Are men** and women equal? See verses and footnotes 4:34; 10:109.

[16:98] When you read the Quran, you shall seek refuge in God from shaitan, the egotistic aspect of your Self, so that you do not deviate from the right path.[493]

[16:99] No-one has power over those who believe and trust in their Sustainer.

[16:100] Satanic influence is only over those who concede their will to their negative desires, thus making their own ego as an equal with God.[494]

[16:101] When a superseding guidance is revealed, and God is fully aware of what He reveals, they say, "You made this up!" Indeed, most of them do not know.[495]

[16:102] Say: "The Ruh-il-Qudus, the Sacred Energy has brought it down from your Sustainer, truthfully, to assure those who believe and to provide a beacon and good news for those who have submitted to God."[496]

[16:103] We are fully aware that they say, "A human being has taught him this." The source they imply is non-Arabic, while this recitation is Arabic, most pure and in verses clear.

[16:104] Surely, those who do not believe in God's revelations are not guided by God. They have incurred a painful retribution.

[16:105] The only ones who fabricate false doctrines are those who do not believe in God's guidance, they are the real liars.

[16:106] Those who reject God after professing acceptance, except those forced to disbelief while their hearts are in full conviction, and become fully content with disbelief have incurred a wrath from God. [497]

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[493] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verses: 2:185 and footnote.

[494] **Shirk** is taking an authority as equal with God. A rebellious Self defies God's commands and decrees, follows its own ego (opinions, desires etc.) in contradiction with God's law thus setting itself as an authority equal to God and becoming a *mushriq*: one who sets up an authority to rank with God. This is shirk: treason and a heinous crime. See verse and footnote 9:4.

[495] **Abrogation:** some guidance replaces previous directions . See verse 2:106.

[496] **Ruh-il-Qudus:** The malaika Gabriel, the Sacred Energy. Ruh is the directive force *from* God, but not *of* God. See verse 4:171.

[497] **The atheist,** the agnostic and others who reject God have without doubt the freedom to do so. However, there is one question that needs to be asked: is it possible that a human being who does not fully understand the universe, barely understands the world he lives in and does not really know how his mind and body work, can be absolutely sure there is no God? As is repeatedly pointed out in the Quran all evidence for God is inferential, had He wanted He could have compelled people to believe, but what value would compulsion have in the development of the Self that can progress only by its own endeavours? Integrity, as C. S. Lewis said, is doing the right thing even when no-one is looking. A person who understands that God sees all things will appreciate this external accountability to a higher, more just authority. See verses 2:256; 3;190; 6:99; 6;109; 6:111; 6:124; 6: 157; 7:176; 10:6; 10:99; 10:101; 11:28; 13:34; 15:87; 16:79; 26:4-5 and 23:66-71. **Muslim** in everything except by name. See verse and footnote 28:53.

[16:107] This is because they have given priority to this life over the life yet to come and such disbelieving people misguide themselves, in accordance with God's ordinance.
[16:108] Their hearts become sealed in accordance with God's ordinance and they cannot hear or see anything worthwhile. Consequently, they remain unaware.
[16:109] Without a doubt, they will be the losers in the life yet to come.
[16:110] As for those who face persecution because they have taken up the challenge then continue to strive and steadfastly persevere. Your Sustainer, because of all this, is their Protector, the Most Merciful.
[16:111] The day will come when every Self will serve as its own advocate and every Self will be paid fully for whatever it has done, without the least injustice.[498]

DO NOT PROHIBIT WHAT GOD HAS NOT

[16:112] God cites the example of a community that used to be secure and prosperous with provisions coming to it from everywhere. But then it turned unappreciative of God's blessings. Consequently, by God's ordinance, hardship, starvation and fear befell upon them. Such is the consequence they incurred for what they did.
[16:113] A messenger from among them had conveyed God's guidance to them but they rejected him. Consequently, the retribution struck them for their transgression.
[16:114] Therefore, you shall eat from God's provisions everything that is lawful and good and be appreciative of God's blessings, if you serve Him alone.
[16:115] He only restricts for you dead animals, excess blood, the meat of pigs and any food which is dedicated to other than God. Unless one is forced to eat these without being deliberate or malicious, then God is Protector, Most Merciful.[499]
[16:116] You shall not invent rules according to your own opinions stating: "This is lawful and that is unlawful," and fabricate doctrines and attribute them to God. Surely, those who fabricate lies and attribute them to God will never succeed.[500]

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[498] **Advocate,** Argue, dispute (Arabic: *jadal.* Root: J'D'L. Derivatives: *jadal, jadala, tu-jadilka. yujadilu, jadil, jidal*). Here the word advocate is used as it best describes the Self which puts forward arguments for and on its own behalf. See verse 2:197 and footnote.

[499] **God lists** only four things that that are restricted because the list of permitted food is everything that is not in this group. Pigs are genetically similar to human beings and to eat pork would almost be like cannibalism. To make anything not decreed as forbidden in the Quran, as haram, is the same as accepting doctrines from authorities other than God. Do not forbid what God has not. See verses and footnotes 2:168-172; 4:43; 5:3-5; 5:87-88; 6:118-121; 6:138; 6:145-150; 9:4; 12:49; 16:100; 16:114-121; 22:36-37.

[500] **Opinions** are no substitute for the truth. See verse and footnote 38:26.

[16:117] They enjoy life briefly then suffer a painful retribution.
[16:118] For the Jews, We prohibited what We narrated to you previously. It was not We who wronged them, they are the ones who wronged their own Self.
[16:119] Yet, in regards to those who do wrong out of ignorance then repent thereafter and reform, your Sustainer is Protector, Most Merciful.[501]

ABRAHAM: AN EXAMPLE FOR ALL PEOPLE

[16:120] Abraham was indeed an exemplary vanguard in his devotion to God and steadfast, and he never accepted any authority to rank with God.
[16:121] Because he was appreciative of His Sustainer's blessings, God chose him and guided him in a straight and balanced path.
[16:122] We granted him happiness in this life and in the life yet to come he will be with the righteous.
[16:123] Then We inspired you to follow the creed of Abraham who was steadfast, he never set up any authority to equal God.
[16:124] For whom the Sabbath was decreed ended up disputing it. Your Sustainer is the One who will judge them on the Day of Resurrection regarding their disputes.

SPREAD GOD'S MESSAGE WITH TOLERANCE

[16:125] You shall invite to the path of your Sustainer with wisdom and kind enlightenment, and debate with them in the best possible manner. Your Sustainer knows best who has strayed from His path and He knows best who are the guided ones.[502]
[16:126] And if you punish, you shall inflict an equivalent punishment. But if you resort to patience instead of revenge, it would be better for the ones who are patient.[503]
[16:127] You shall resort to patience and your patience is attainable only with God's help. Do not grieve over them and do not be annoyed by their schemes.
[16:128] God is with those who keep their duty to Him and those who do good.

[501] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.
[502] **Tolerance** and understanding is advocated at all times by God. A good example is the best weapon against evil and corrupt people. By applying this guidance individuals can excel in being good examples. See verses 2:263; 4:137; 6:108; 7:199; 23:96; 24:22: 28:54-55; 29:46; 41:34; 43:87-89. Argue, dispute, debate. See verse and footnote 2:197. **Invite:** see verse 14:44.
[503] **Patient perseverance:** see verse and footnote 2:153.

Sura 17: The Children of Israel (Bani Israel)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[17:1] Glory be to the One who inspired His servant to endeavour during the night from the Sanctioned Submissions to the fringes of submission that We blessed in order to show him Our signs. Indeed He hears all things and sees all things,
[17:2] and We gave Moses the guidance and rendered it as a beacon of enlightenment for the Children of Israel that: "You shall not seek anyone as your patron to rank with Me."[504]
[17:3] They are the descendants of those whom We carried with Noah, he was an appreciative servant.
[17:4] We declare to the Children of Israel in this scripture: "You will commit gross evil on earth twice and you will become great tyrants.
[17:5] "When this transpires the first time We will send against you servants of Ours who possess great might and they will invade your homes. This is a warning that you should heed.
[17:6] "Afterwards you will have the upper hand and you will have much wealth and many children and you will be more numerous.
[17:7] "If you work righteousness, you do good for your own benefit but if you commit evil, you do so to your own detriment. Thus, when the second time comes to pass, they will defeat you and violate your submissions, the doctrines that you hold close, just as they did the first time. They will wipe out all the gains you had accomplished."
[17:8] Your Sustainer showers you with His mercy. But if you revert to transgression, We will counter this with retribution. A hell, a turmoil of your own making, is designated as a final abode for the disbelievers.
[17:9] This Quran guides along the best path and brings good news to the believers who lead a righteous life, that they have deserved a great recompense.[505]
[17:10] As for those who disbelieve in the life yet to come, We have prepared for them a painful retribution.
[17:11] The human being often supplicates for something that may hurt him, thinking that he is asking for something good. The human being is impatient.

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[504] **This Sura,** as the name suggests, is about Children of Israel and the events that took place with Moses, how he journeyed into the night to see God manifest His signs that he (Moses) was to show Firawn. The night journey mentioned here is part of the history of Moses referred to in verses 20:9-48. It is imperative to point out that the opening word, in Arabic, of verse 17:2, 'wa' - translates as 'and'. The role of 'and' is fundamental here as it signifies the continuity of the subject started in the previous verse: it is Moses and not Muhammad (as traditionally believed) who is the subject of verse 17:1, as he is the subject of verse 17:2 that mentions his name.
[505] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verse and footnote 2:185.

[17:12] We rendered the night and the day as two signs. We made the night dark and the day light that you may seek provisions from your Sustainer therein. The night and the day also establishes for you a timing system and a means of calculation. We thus explain everything in detail.
[17:13] Every person's actions are the signs of augury mapping out his future. On the Day of Reckoning We will hand him a record that he can understand.
[17:14] Now see your own evidence of what you did. Today, you suffice as your own reckoner.
[17:15] Whoever is guided, is guided for his own good and whoever moves astray does so to his own detriment. No wrongdoer will bear the guilt of anyone else. We never punish without first sending a guiding message.
[17:16] Before We annihilate any community, the leaders are given sufficient latitude, in accordance with Our ordinance, to commit vast corruption therein. Once their wickedness saturates, then retribution is a justified consequence. We wipe it out completely, an utter destruction.
[17:17] Many a generation We have eradicated after Noah. Your Sustainer is most efficient in dealing with the transgressions of His servants. He is fully aware and sees all things.

THE FUTURE: A LIFE YET TO COME

17:18] Anyone who chooses this fleeting life as a priority, We will hasten to give him all he deserves in accordance with Our ordinance, then We commit him to a turmoil, where he suffers forever, despised and defeated.
[17:19] As for those who choose the future, the life yet to come, as their priority and do good works, while in harmony with this guidance, their efforts will be well rewarded.
[17:20] For each of them We provide. We provide for all from the good things from your Sustainer's bounties. Your Sustainer's bounties are inexhaustible.
[17:21] Note how We prefer those who do good above others, for those who aspire towards prosperity, the differences in the life yet to come are far greater and far more significant.

[17:22] You shall not set up any other authority to equal or rival God, lest you end up despised and disgraced.
[17:23] Your Sustainer has decreed that you shall not serve anyone as equal to Him and you shall honour your parents for as long as one or both of them live, you shall never speak harshly to them or show any gesture of annoyance, you shall treat them amicably at all times.[506]

[506] **Parents to be honoured:** Honour is something which needs to be shown in practical ways. Unless honour manifests as something real and constructive, it is meaningless. Honouring your parents

[17:24] And lower for them the wings of humility and kindness and say, "My Sustainer, have mercy on them, for they raised me from infancy."
[17:25] Your Sustainer is fully aware of your innermost thoughts. If you maintain righteousness, He is the Protector of those who turn to Him and repent.[507]
[17:26] This is their right, and you shall also spend for the good of your relatives, the needy, the poor and the refugees, but do not be excessive or extravagant.
[17:27] The extravagant are brothers of shaitan, the egotistic Self and the ego is unappreciative of his Sustainer.
[17:28] Even if you have to turn away and move afar from your parents, as you pursue the mercy of your Sustainer, you shall treat them in the best possible manner.
[17:29] You shall not be miserly and tight-fisted, nor shall you foolishly open up your hands in extravagance, lest you end up blamed and exposed.
[17:30] For your Sustainer increases the provision for anyone according to His ordinance and reduces it according to His ordinance. He is fully aware of those He created and sees all things.
[17:31] You shall not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them, as well as for you. Killing them is a gross offense.[508]
[17:32] You shall not commit fornication or adultery: it is an aversion and wicked behaviour.[509]

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means not to express annoyance or to speak harshly to them. Honour means *never* to mistreat them. It is crucially important to understand this. Just as parents should never abuse their children, children are prohibited from ill-treating their parents. Just as parents have a duty to write a will in favour of their children, children, too, have a responsibility to include their parents in their will, and as exemplified by Joseph, raise their status financially, where practical, raising their parents' lifestyle to their own standard. Any benefit to other relatives or indeed other people is secondary. What do children, when they become adults, do on an *ongoing* basis that has a positive and life-enhancing impact on the lives of their parents? The answer will reveal the true nature of the relationship between parents and their children. See verses 2:83; 2:180; 2:200; 2:215; 12:100; 17:23-25; 46:15. **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verses and footnotes 2:3; 2:215. **Equity:** see verse and footnote 10:109.

[507] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.

[508] **Killing of children,** especially new born girls, is common even today in both India and China. This injunction is not as strange as it first seems as children are often victims because parents cannot afford to feed them, marry them off due to exorbitant dowry customs, or because they become embroiled in the drama of estranged parents where one parent murders his or her offspring rather than give them up to their spouse. The Quran not only forbids the killing of offspring, which includes abortion without medical reason, but also the suppression of opportunities for children including the provision of decent healthcare and education, the right not to be enslaved or put to work at an early age. The responsibility of these duties should fall on elected governing bodies and not charities or other Non-Government Organisations (NGO's).

[17:33] You shall not kill any person, except in the course of justice, for God has made life sacred. If one is killed unjustly then We give his heir authority to demand justice. Thus, he shall not exceed the limits in enforcing justice for the murder and he will be helped.
[17:34] You shall not touch the orphans' money except for their own good until they reach maturity. You shall fulfil your duty, for fulfilling a duty is a incumbent responsibility.
[17:35] You shall give full measure when you trade, and weigh equitably. This is better and more righteous.
[17:36] You shall not accept any information unless you verify it for yourself. We have given you the hearing, the eyesight and the intelligence and you are accountable for using them.
[17:37] You shall not walk arrogantly on earth, you cannot force your way through everything nor can you reach the height of the mountains.
[17:38] All regressive behaviour is condemned by your Sustainer.
[17:39] This is part of the wisdom given to you by your Sustainer. You shall not set up another authority to rival or equal God, lest you end up in a turmoil of hell, blamed and defeated.[510]

[17:40] Has your Sustainer given you sons, while taking for Himself the malaika as daughters? How could you speak such a profanity?[511]
[17:41] We have cited in this Quran all kinds of examples, that they may take heed. But it only augments their aversion.[512]
[17:42] Say: "If there were any other authorities to equal Him, as they claim, they would have tried to overthrow the possessor of all sovereignty."
[17:43] Be He glorified, He is much too exalted, far above the profanities that they speak.
[17:44] Glorifying Him are the seven universes, the earth and everyone in them. There is nothing that does not glorify Him, but you do not understand their glorification. He is Clement and the Protector.[513]

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[509] **Fornication/adultery:** (Arabic: *zinna*). Illicit sexual intercourse with consent. Illicit sexual relations. The Quran makes no distinction between adultery and fornication, both are termed as Illicit sex. See verse and footnote 24:4.

[510] **The decrees** given in verses 17:23-39 are part of the profound guidance from God. It is those who oppose such wisdom and defy this guidance who cause fear and turmoil. The simple advice in these verses can go a long way to create peace and security for any individual or community.

[511] **Malaika** is the collective term for the energies, forces of nature and messengers of the universe. See verse and footnote 35:1.

[512] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). Explanations of this guidance are given in many different ways but people still don't see the value - only to their detriment. See verse and footnote 2:185; 22:46.

[513] **Every creation** that submits i.e. follows the laws of God, is in fact glorifying Him. The solar systems, the universe, the earth, the plants, the animals and the human beings. Anything that acts or responds to God's ordinance is glorifying God. See verses 2:30; 9:112; 24:41.

TEACH THE QURAN ALONE

[17:45] When you read the Quran, there is a barrier that you cannot see, between you and those who do not believe in the continuous future, a life yet to come.[514]

[17:46] In harmony with Our ordinance, shields form around perverse minds, that prevent them from understanding it and a deafness is in their ears. And when you advocate accountability to your Sustainer, the One, in the Quran alone, the recitation of His guidance, they turn away in repugnance.[515]

[17:47] We are fully aware of what they hear, when they listen to you and when they conspire secretly, the disbelievers say, "You are following a fanatical man."

[17:48] Note how they describe you and how this causes them to drift off the path.

[17:49] They questioned, "After we turn into bones and fragments, we get resurrected anew?"

[17:50] Say: "Yes. Even if you turn into rocks or iron.[516]

[17:51] "Even if you turn into any kind of creation that you deem impossible." They will then say, "Who will bring us back?" Say: "The One who created you in the first place." They will then shake their heads and say, "When will that be?" Say: "It may be closer than you think."

[17:52] The day He summons you, you will respond by praising Him and you will then realise that you had lasted in this life but a short while.

CARE FOR EACH OTHER

[17:53] Tell My servants to treat each other in the best possible manner, for your Ego will always try to drive a wedge among you. Surely, the egotistic Self is man's most ardent enemy.

[17:54] Your Sustainer knows you best. According to His ordinance, He may shower you with mercy or He may punish you. We did not send any messenger to be your advocate.

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[514] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R).The Quran's guidance is available only to those who first ignite the torch within themselves to seek the truth, otherwise, preconceived ideas can be barriers to understanding just as the negative things that a person may do or say veils his understanding. See verses and footnotes 17:46 & verse 2:185.

[515] **Serve God** alone and follow the Quran alone. Those who follow the opinions of their priests, leaders or traditions falsely attributed to God or His messengers do so to their own detriment. **God alone**: see verses 7:70; 39:45, 40:12; 40:84; 60:4.

[516] **How can people** turn into rocks and iron? A carbon atom that may once have been part of a human being can become part of a rock, and a carbon atom that was once iron can become part of a human being and vice versa. See verses and footnote: 36:78-81.

[17:55] Your Sustainer is the best knower of everyone in the heavens and the earth. In accordance with Our ordinance We exalted some messengers over others. For example, We gave David the Zabur: the guidance.

THE TRIALS OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

[17:56] Say: "Implore whatever authorities you have set up to rank with Him." They have no power to relieve your afflictions nor can they prevent them.
[17:57] Even the authorities that they implore are seeking ways and means towards their Sustainer. They pray for His mercy and fear His retribution. Surely, the retribution of your Sustainer is agonising.
[17:58] There is not a community that We will not commit to confront a profound conclusion on the Day of Reckoning and inflict severe retribution upon the guilty. There is already a record determined, presenting the judgement of Our ordinance.[517]
[17:59] Nothing prevents Us from sending manifest signs, only that the previous generations rejected them. For example, We showed Thamoud the camel, a profound sign and a test of restraint but they transgressed. We sent trials of self-discipline only to instil awareness of duty.[518]
[17:60] We inform you that your Sustainer has full jurisdiction over all mankind and We gave you insight to show you trials for all the people, and in the Quran an example of accursed people who spread out divided like the branches of a tree. We show to them clear proofs to instil consciousness of duty, but this only augmented their defiance.[519]

THE CONFLICT OF THE CONSCIENCE

[17:61] When We said to the malaika, "Surrender yourself before Adam," they conceded, except shaitan: the egotistic Self. He said, "Shall I yield to the one You created from clay?"[520]
[17:62] He said, "Since You honoured him over me, if You respite me till the Day of Resurrection, I will possess all his descendants, except a few."
[17:63] God said, "Then go, you and those who follow you will end up in turmoil of hell as your punishment, an equitable penalty for your work.
[17:64] "You may entice them with beautiful words and mobilise all at your disposal and all your means against them and enjoy the fruits of their

[517] **This does** not mean that the future is predetermined but simply that God knows all the probable paths anyone can take and the actual choices that will be made and the conclusion of those choices.
[518] **Camel:** a symbol of self-discipline and exercise of duty. See verse and footnote 91:14.
[519] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). Separating into sects, making communities with conflicting values and goals, is strictly forbidden and it is harmful to individuals and societies. The Quran provides the optimum social system. See verses and footnotes 2:35; 6:159 & 2:185.
[520] **Adam's shaitan:** his egotistical Self. See verses and footnotes 2:30-39.

wealth and children and make promises to them. Anything the shaitan, your egotistical Self, deludes you to is no more than an illusion.
[17:65] "As for My servants, you have no power over them." Your Sustainer suffices as an advocate.[521]

MANKIND IMPLORES GOD UNTIL THE PAIN IS GONE

[17:66] Your Sustainer is the One who causes the ships to float on the ocean that you may seek His generosity in abundance. He is Most Merciful towards you.
[17:67] When you are afflicted in the middle of the sea, you forget those whom you set up to rank with the One who sustains you and sincerely implore Him alone. But as soon as He delivers you to the safety of the shore, you revert to your corruption. Indeed, the human being is unappreciative.
[17:68] Have you guaranteed that He will not cause the land or the sea to swallow you? Or, that He will not send upon you a hurricane, then you find no protector?
[17:69] Have you guaranteed that He will not return you to the sea another time, then send upon you a storm that drowns you because of your disbelief in His guidance? Once that happens, We will not give you another chance.
[17:70] We have honoured the children of Adam and carried them on land and on the sea. We provided for them sustenance of things that are good and We gave them greater advantages than many of Our creatures.
[17:71] The day will come when We summon every person together with their record. As for those who have sent forth a record of righteousness, they will see their vindication and will not suffer the least injustice.
[17:72] As for those who failed to see good in this life, they will be unable to see the good in the life yet to come and will be as the blind groping for some support or even worse.

THE MESSENGER DELIVERED GOD'S MESSAGE INTACT

[17:73] They almost diverted you from this guidance We have given you. They pressured you to fabricate something else and then would have considered you a friend.[522]
[17:74] If it were not that We strengthened you, you almost leaned towards them just a little bit.

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[521] **Shaitan has no power** over those who follow God's guidance in the Quran because these individuals have high self-discipline and they do not succumb to their selfish desires. No matter how difficult the situation, they remain steadfast. See verses 2:177; 16:100. See also verse and footnote 7:17. **Drifter:** see verse 15:42.

[522] **The messenger** delivered the Quran and could never have given any supplementary guidance. See verses 11:13; 48:25; 69:43-48. Demands to change the Quran 10:15. See also verses and footnotes 4:42; 7:203; 68:37; 78:40; 80:42. **Follow the Quran alone**: see footnote to verse 59:21.

[17:75] Had you done that, We would have doubled the punishment for you in this life and after death, and you would have found no one to help you against Us.[523]
[17:76] They almost banished you from the land to get rid of you, so they could revert as soon as you left.
[17:77] Such has been Our consistent way with those to whom We sent the message before you and you will find that Our way never changes.[524]

REFLECT ON QURANIC VALUES

[17:78] You shall always observe your commitments, even as the sun rises to its highest point at noon and as it moves towards the darkness of night. You shall also observe your duty to read the Quran at dawn to remind yourself and witness the benefits of doing this at daybreak,
[17:79] and During the night, you shall reflect on this guidance for extra benefit so that your Sustainer may raise you to an exalted status,[525]
[17:80] and say, "My Sustainer, admit me to an honourable position and let me depart in an honourable way and grant me from You a powerful support."
[17:81] And proclaim, "The truth always prevails and falsehood vanishes. Falsehood is destined to vanish."
[17:82] and We revealed the Quran as an arbitrator and a mercy for those who sincerely believe. But for the ones who displace good with evil works, it only increases the wickedness of these transgressors.[526]
[17:83] When We send goodness on the human being he becomes preoccupied and heedless. But when adversity strikes him, he turns despondent.
[17:84] Say: "Everyone works in accordance with his own belief and your Sustainer knows best which ones are guided in the right path."
[17:85] And they ask you about the Ruh. Say: "The Ruh is from my Sustainer but not of Him. The knowledge permitted to you is very small."
[17:86] And if We will, We can take back this guidance We revealed to you, then you will find no protector against Us.[527]
[17:87] This is but a mercy from your Sustainer. His generosities upon you have been great.

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[523] **The messenger** is shown here [verses 17:73-75] as a human being with weaknesses and bias towards his people who nearly influenced him to change the Quran. However, the Quran is a protected book and remains so. See verses 4:82; 10:37; 41:41-42; 85:21-22. **God's messenger** was encouraged to make-up alternative doctrines. 6:112-113; 7:203; 10:15; 11:12-13; 40:55; 41:26-27; 48:25; 68:8-9. See also verses 13:27 & 25:30. Human messengers with human failings 40:66.

[524] **God's way:** (Arabic: *sunnatullah*) God's system is constant and does not change. Unchanging principles in changing times: Permanent Values always remain the same. See verse 33:62.

[525] **Status:** (Arabic: *maqam*). Following this guidance will take you to a higher status. See verse and footnote 2:125.

[526] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verses and footnotes 2:185; 17:88. The Quran is the Criterion and when applied is also a mercy to heal the injuries caused to the Self. The greater the injury, the greater time it takes to heal. see verse 21:106.

[527] **Ruh is the** directive energy *from* God, but not *of* God. See verse 4:171.

[17:88] Say: "If all the visible powers and all the invisible powers banded together in order to produce a Quran like this, they could never produce anything like it, no matter how much assistance they lent one another."[528]
[17:89] And We have repeated for mankind in this Quran all kinds of examples, but most people insist upon disbelieving.
[17:90] They said, "We will not believe you unless you cause a spring to gush out of the ground.
[17:91] "Or unless you grow an enchanting garden of date palms and grapes, with rivers running through it.
[17:92] "Or unless you cause masses from the sky, as you claimed, to plunge upon us. Or unless you bring God and the angels before our eyes.
[17:93] "Or unless you scheme luxuries for us, or ascend up into the sky. Even if you do climb, we will not believe unless you conjure a book that we can touch." Say: "Glory be to the One who sustains me. I am no more than a human messenger."[529]
[17:94] What prevented some of the people from believing when the guidance came to them is their saying, "Did God send a human being as a messenger?"
[17:95] Say: "If the earth were inhabited by malaika, We would have sent down to them from the sky a malaika as a messenger."
[17:96] Say: "God suffices as a witness between me and you. He is fully aware of His servants and sees all things."

GOD CAN RECREATE - JUST AS HE CREATED BEFORE

[17:97] Whoever is guided by the ordinance of God is truly guided. And whoever goes astray, you will never find for them anyone to sustain them and no one as protector beside Him. We will summon them on the Day of Resurrection forcibly. They are as the blind, dumb and deaf. Their destination is a burning turmoil, whenever it cools down, We will increase their fire, intense and burning.
[17:98] Such is their just retribution since they rejected Our guidance. They said, "After we turn into bones and fragments, do we get resurrected into a new creation?"

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[528] **A challenge** from God. See verse and footnote 11:13.
[529] **Miracles:** the suspension of natural laws. The demands to produce miracles were many, but the messenger was only a human being and did not have the power to do any of these things. However, there are many traditions (hadith attributed to the messenger), totally in conflict with this verse, recounting an event known as the *Isra wal miraj* where the messenger did climb up to heaven on a horse-like steed known as the *buraq*. Miracles are repugnant to the consistently rational spirit of the Quran. Here, when asked for such miracles, the messenger simply affirms that he is only a human being and a messenger, he has no power to produce any of the miracles they expected. See verses 6:50; 10:20; 40:66. See also verses and footnotes 17:73-75; 48:25; 68:37. **Angel:** Those who have no proper knowledge believe the malaika to be female angels. See verses and footnotes 2:30; 6:8.

[17:99] Could they not see that God who created the heavens and the earth is able to recreate the same creations? He has according to His ordinance, predetermined for them an irrevocable life span? Yet, those who reject this guidance insist upon disbelieving.
[17:100] Say: "If you possessed any of my Sustainer's resources of mercy, you would have withheld from releasing them, fearing that you might exhaust them. The human being is much too possessive."

MOSES AND THE SIGNS FROM GOD

[17:101] We supported Moses with nine profound signs - ask the Children of Israel. When he went to them, Firawn said to him, "I think that you, Moses, are bewitched."
[17:102] He said, "You know full well that no one can manifest these except the One who sustains the heavens and the earth. I think that you, Firawn, are doomed."
[17:103] When Firawn pursued them and as he chased them out of his land, We drowned him, together with those who were with him, all of them.
[17:104] And then We said to the Children of Israel, "Go live in this land. When the final anticipated event comes to pass, We will summon you all in one group."

THE QURAN REVEALED OVER TIME

[17:105] Truthfully We revealed this guidance and with the truth it was inspired. We did not send the messenger except as a bearer of good news, as well as a warner.
[17:106] The Quran, a recitation that We inspired its release slowly in order for you to read it to your people over an extended period, although We inspired it all at once.
[17:107] Proclaim, "Believe in it or do not believe in it." Those who possess knowledge, when it is recited to them, they concede to it willingly.
[17:108] They say, "Glory be to our Sustainer. This fulfils our Sustainer's promise."
[17:109] They concede in humility and they become overwhelmed with gratitude, their reverence reinforced.
[17:110] Say: "Call Him God or call Him Most Merciful, whichever name you ascribe to Him, to Him belongs the most engaging attributes." You shall not declare your commitments loudly and aggressively nor too softly and passively, but use a moderate tone and method.
[17:111] And proclaim: "Praise be to God, He has never begotten a son nor does He have a partner in His domain nor does He need any ally out of weakness." and magnify Him constantly.

Sura 18: The Cave (Al-Kahf)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[18:1] Praise God who revealed to His servant this guidance and made it flawless.
[18:2] A perfect guidance to warn of severe retribution from Him and to deliver good news to those who believe in it and protect themselves from lasting harm, they have earned a generous recompense,
[18:3] wherein they abide forever.
[18:4] And to warn those who say, "God has begotten a son."
[18:5] They possess no knowledge about this, nor did their parents. What a blasphemy coming out of their mouths. What they utter is a gross lie.
[18:6] You need not torment your Self and blame yourself because they reject this Hadith, the message of guidance, and you should aggrieve not at their disbelieving.[530]
[18:7] We have made many attractive things on earth in order to test them and thus distinguish those among them who do good works.
[18:8] Inevitably We will wipe out everything on it, leaving it completely barren.

THE YOUTHS IN THE CAVE

[18:9] Do you deem that the people of the cave and the numbers connected with them are a wonder among Our signs?
[18:10] When some youths took refuge in a cave, they said, "Our Sustainer shower us with Your mercy and shape our affairs with Your guidance."
[18:11] We then sealed their hearing in the cave for a predetermined number of years.
[18:12] Then We resurrected them to ascertain which of the two parties could count the duration of their stay therein.
[18:13] We narrate to you their history, truthfully. They were youths who believed in their Sustainer and We increased their guidance.
[18:14] We strengthened their hearts when they stood up and proclaimed: "The One who sustains the heavens and the earth is the only One who sustains us. We will never serve any other authority to rank with Him, otherwise we would be far astray.

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[530] **Many people** who profess to be muslim give preference to the *hadith* wrongly attributed to the messenger yet ignore this Hadith from God: the Quran. Is it any wonder that the messenger will lament of the Day of Accountability that his people have deserted the Quran. In this verse he is deeply concerned that they reject this hadith: God's guidance in the Quran. See footnote to verse 4:42 and verse 25:30. See also verses 26:3; 31:6; 39:23. **Following** your parents blindly is one of the greatest human tragedies. Not long after your birth, they decide your name, nationality, religion and sect. And you spend the rest of your life defending something you did not even choose. See verse 37:74.

[18:15] "Here are our people setting up authorities to equal Him. Why do they not provide proof to support their stand? Who is more evil than the one who fabricates lies and attributes them to God?
[18:16] "Since we wish to avoid them and their service to those other than God, let us take refuge in this cave. May our Sustainer shower us with His mercy and direct us to the right decision."

[18:17] You could see the sun when it rose coming from the right side of their cave and when it set, it shone on them from the left, as they slept in its hollow. This is one of God's signs. Whoever is guided by God's ordinance is truly guided and whoever goes astray, you will not find for him a guiding friend.
[18:18] You would think that they were awake, when they were in fact asleep. We turned them to the right side and the left side, while their dog stretched his legs in their midst. Had you looked at them, you would have fled from them, stricken with terror.

[18:19] When We resurrected them, they asked each other, "How long have we been here?" "We have been here one day or part of the day," they answered. "Our Sustainer knows best how long we stayed here, so let us send one of us with some money to the city. Let him choose the best food and buy some for us. He should keep a low profile and attract no attention.
[18:20] "If they discover us, they will stone us or force us to revert to their religion, then you can never succeed."[531]
[18:21] We caused them to be discovered, to let everyone know that God's promise is true, and to remove all doubt concerning the resurrection after the end of this life. Some people then disputed among themselves regarding them. Some said, "Let us build a monument in their memory." Their Sustainer is the best in knowledge about them. Those who prevailed said, "We will offer submissions for them."
[18:22] Some said, "They were three, their dog being the fourth," while others said, "Five, the sixth being their dog," as they guessed. And others said, "Seven," and the eighth was their dog. Say: "My Sustainer knows best of their number." Only a few knew the correct number. Therefore, do not argue with them, conjecturing with them. You need not waste time debating about this.[532]

[531] **Stoning** as a punishment is not decreed in the Quran. In the Quran stoning is only carried out by mushrikeen, disbelievers and those who reject this guidance. See verse 11:91.
[532] **Are dogs the untouchables?** It seems that dogs have really been put in the doghouse by traditionalists, despite the fact the Quran designates their role as companions and co-hunters. In this history of the young men who took refuge in the cave, their dog shared a place sleeping amidst them. The dog was clearly a friend to the boys otherwise why would it be there? Furthermore in sura verse 5:4 God permits people to eat the animals hunted and caught by their trained dogs. Apparently like most of the deviant beliefs the repulsion for dogs comes from the

POWER OF ATTRACTION: INVOKE GOD'S ORDINANCE

[18:23] You shall not say that you will with certainty do anything in the future,
[18:24] without saying, "God willing." If you forget to do this, you must immediately remember your Sustainer and say, "May my Sustainer guide me to do better next time."

THE TIME SPENT IN THE CAVE

[18:25] People speculated that they stayed in their cave three hundred years and nine.
[18:26] Say: "God is the best knower of how long they stayed there." He knows all the secrets in the heavens and the earth. By His grace you can see, by His grace you can hear. There is none beside Him as Sustainer and Protector and He never permits any partners to share in His authority.
[18:27] You shall reflect on what is revealed to you of your Sustainer's guidance. Nothing abrogates His words and you will not find any other source of guidance equal to it.[533]

TOLERANCE: FREEDOM OF BELIEF

[18:28] You shall join forces and be with those who serve their Sustainer day and night seeking a way towards Him alone. Do not turn your eyes away from this guidance seeking the vanities of this world. Nor shall you obey the one whose heart is rendered oblivious to Our message, one who pursues his own selfish desires or those whose priorities are confused,
[18:29] and proclaim: "This is the truth from your Sustainer," then whoever wills let him believe and whoever wills let him disbelieve. We have prepared for the transgressors a fire that will completely surround them. When they scream for help, they will have a liquid concentrated like acid that scalds their mouths. What a miserable drink. What a miserable end.
[18:30] As for those who believe and lead a righteous life, We never fail to recompense those who work righteousness.
[18:31] They have deserved gardens of plenty where rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with jewellery and will wear clothes of fine material and will rest on comfortable furnishings. What a wonderful reward, what a wonderful abode.[534]

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fabricated hadith wrongly attributed to the good messenger. Dogs as hunters and pets add value to human life and should be welcomed.

[533] **There is** only one source of guidance from God: the Quran: unchanging principles in a changing world. See verses and footnotes: 6:114; 4:42.

[534] **All these** are allegorical terms that appealed to the Arabs who were the first recipients of this message and who could relate to them, given the hot and harsh conditions they lived in.

PROPERTY & CHILDREN: MISPLACED PRIORITY

[18:32] Cite for them the example of two men: We gave one of them two vineyards of grapes, surrounded by date palms with other crops between them.[535]
[18:33] Both fields produced their crops on time and generously, for We caused a river to run through them.
[18:34] Once after harvesting, he boastfully told his friend: "I am far more prosperous than you and I command more respect from other people."
[18:35] When he entered his garden, he wronged his Self by saying, "I do not think that this will ever end.
[18:36] "Moreover, I think this is it. I do not think that this will ever come to an end. Even if I am returned to my Sustainer, I will be clever enough to possess an even better one over there."
[18:37] His friend said to him, as he debated with him, "Have you disbelieved in the One who created you with a different constitution and from a tiny drop, then perfected you into a man?
[18:38] "As for me, God is my Sustainer and I will never set up any other authority to equal my Sustainer.
[18:39] "When you enter your garden you should say, `This is God's gift, I can never possess anything except by God's leave. You may see that I possess less money and fewer children than you.
[18:40] "But my Sustainer may grant me better than your vineyards. He may send a violent storm from the sky that wipes out your orchards leaving it completely barren.
[18:41] "Or its water may sink deeper out of your reach."

REMEMBERING GOD WHEN IN PAIN

[18:42] Indeed, his crops were wiped out and he ended up sorrowful, lamenting what he had spent on it in vain, as his property lay barren. He finally said, "I wish I was never devoted to my property to the exclusion of my duty to my Sustainer."
[18:43] No force on earth could have helped him against God nor was it possible for him to receive any help.
[18:44] That is because the only true sustainer and protector is God. He provides the best recompense and with Him is the best destination.
[18:45] Cite for them the example of this life as water that We send down from the sky to produce plants of the earth, then they turn into hay that is blown away by the wind. God is in control of all things.

[535] **The Quran** cites many examples of idols that people worship when they do not serve God, they include children 7:190, religious leaders and scholars 9:31, property 18:42, dead saints and messengers 16:20-21, 35:14; 18:102; 46:5-6 and their own ego 25:43, 45:23. See also verse 18:50.

PRIORITISE YOUR LIFE

[18:46] Money and children are the joys of this life, but the righteous works provide an eternal recompense from your Sustainer and far better rewards.
[18:47] The day will come when We wipe out the mountains and you will see the earth barren. We will summon them all, not leaving out a single one of them.

PEOPLE ARE CREATED AND DIE AS INDIVIDUALS

[18:48] They will be presented before your Sustainer. You will return to Us as individuals, just as We created you initially. Indeed, this is what you claimed will never happen.
[18:49] The record will be shown and you will see the guilty fearful of its contents. They will say, "Help us now. How come this record leaves nothing out, small or large, without counting it?" They will find everything they had done brought forth. Your Sustainer is never unjust towards anyone.

THE EGO: YOUR MANIFEST ENEMY

[18:50] When We said to the malaika, "Surrender yourself before Adam," they all yielded, except Iblees: the egotistic Self. He then became a jinn, the latent aspect of the Self, for he disobeyed a command of His Sustainer. Will you choose to nurture your ego and its negative aspects to direct you, instead of God, even though it will harm you? What a miserable substitute.[536]
[18:51] I never permitted them to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor the creation of themselves. Nor do I permit the wicked to work in My domain.
[18:52] The day will come when God says, "Call upon those whom you ascribed as My partners, whom you claimed to have authority to equal Me." They will call on them, but they will not respond. An insurmountable barrier will separate them from each other.
[18:53] The guilty will see the torment and will realise that they will fall into it. They will have no escape from there.

[536] **Jinn:** latent, concealed, invisible, non-apparent or undistinguished. Iblees (shaitan) a *malaika,* the negative egotistic aspect of the Self is a hidden and latent feature of each and every human being. This verse, when read in Arabic, shows that Iblees (Shaitan) is the 'free will' of our Self, the Ego, a potentially harmful component and *became* a jinn, an invisible aspect of the human psyche: the Self. **Adam's shaitan:** his egotistical Self. The metaphorical description here means that Iblees (Shaitan) refused to submit (as an expression of 'free will'). He transformed into the latent aspect of the human Self. He exists invisible, with ability to manifest as an influence that impedes development. See verses and footnotes 2:30-39; 53:32; 73:1-28. Everything in the heavens and the earth in the service of mankind. See verse and footnote 31:20. **Ego as authority.** See verses and footnotes 18:32; 20:123; 25:43; 38:26; 45:23.

QURAN: ALL KINDS OF EXAMPLES

[18:54] We have cited in this Quran every kind of example, but the human being is the most argumentative creature.[537]

[18:55] Nothing prevents any people from believing, when the guidance comes to them and from seeking the protection of their Sustainer, except that they demand to see some kind of miracle or challenge to see the retribution beforehand, as was the way of previous generations.

[18:56] We send the messengers only as deliverers of good news, as well as warners. Those who disbelieve argue with falsehood in attempt to defeat the truth, and they take My proofs and warnings in vain.

[18:57] Who are more wicked than those when reminded of their Sustainer's guidance disregard it, continually and without realising what they are doing. Consequently, shields develop around their minds and they thus become resistant to understanding, and deafness permeates in their ears. Thus, no matter what you do to guide them, they can never be guided.

[18:58] Yet, your Sustainer is the protector, full of mercy. If He now called them to account for their deeds, He would annihilate them immediately. Instead, He gives them respite until a specific predetermined time, then they can never escape.[538]

[18:59] Many a community We annihilated because of their transgressions, We designated a specific time for their annihilation.

THE JOURNEY OF MOSES

[18:60] Moses said to his helper, "I will not rest until I reach the point where the two rivers meet, no matter how long it takes."

[18:61] When they reached the point where the rivers met, they forgot their fish and it slid back into the river.

[18:62] After they passed that point, he said to his helper, "Let us have something to eat. All this travelling has thoroughly exhausted me."

[18:63] He said, "Remember when we sat by the rock back there? I paid no attention to the fish. It was my egotistic Self that made me forget and it strangely found its way back into the river."

[18:64] Moses said, "That was the place we were looking for." They traced their steps back.

[18:65] There they found one of Our servants whom We exalted with Our mercy and bestowed upon him from Our own knowledge.

[18:66] Moses called to him, "Can I follow you that you may teach me some of the knowledge and the guidance bestowed upon you?"

[18:67] He said, "You will not be able to put up with me."

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[537] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verses and footnotes 2:185; 15:91.

[538] **This period** is sufficient time to reflect and return to the right guidance and repair any damage done. When the Self is injured beyond repair that is the torment of a hell, an everlasting retribution. **Repentance:** what is it? See verses and footnotes 9:112; 68:32.

[18:68] "How can you bear that which you do not understand?"
[18:69] He said, "You will find me, God willing, patient. I will not disobey anything you tell me to do."
[18:70] He said, "If you follow me, then you shall not ask me about anything, unless I choose to tell you about it."

THE THREE INCIDENTS

[18:71] So together they went. When they disembarked a ship, he bore a hole in it. Moses asked, "Did you bore a hole in it to drown its people? You have committed something terrible."
[18:72] He said, "Did I not say that you cannot stand to be with me?"
[18:73] Moses replied, "I am sorry. Do not punish me for my forgetfulness. Do not be too harsh with me."
[18:74] So they went further. When they met a young boy, Moses' companion killed the young boy. Moses asked, "Why did you kill such an innocent person, who did not kill another person? You have committed something horrendous."
[18:75] He said, "Did I not tell you that you cannot stand to be with me?"
[18:76] Moses then said, "If I ask you about anything else, then do not let me stay with you. You have heard enough apologies from me."
[18:77] So they continued their journey. When they reached a certain community, they asked the people for some food, but they refused to host them. Nearby, they found a wall about to collapse and he fixed it. Moses asked again: "If you wanted, you could have demanded a wage for that."
[18:78] Moses' companion finally said, "Now we have to part company. But I will explain to you everything you could not understand.
[18:79] "As for the ship, it belonged to some poor fishermen and I wanted to make it defective. There was a king coming after them, who was confiscating every ship, forcibly.
[18:80] "As for the boy, his parents were mu'min: believers, and I saw that he was going to torment them with his transgression and rebellion.
[18:81] "I desired that your Sustainer substitute in his place another son: one who would be better in purity and kindness.[539]
[18:82] "As for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the city. Under it there was a treasure that belonged to them. Because their father was a righteous man, your Sustainer wanted them to grow up and attain full strength, then extract their treasure. Such is mercy from your Sustainer. I

[539] **This servant** was clearly special as he had knowledge beyond what can be expected of a normal man. The killing of the young boy could only be carried out by God's decree therefore this is not a sanction to take the life of any person - even by a parent or a relative. **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*). Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. See verses and footnote 2:43; 91:1-9. **Honour killings.** See footnote to verse 28:26.

did none of that from my own desire. This is the explanation of the things you could not stand."

ZUL-QARNAIN: THE POWERFUL

[18:83] They ask you about Zul-Qarnain. Say: "I will narrate to you some of his history."
[18:84] We granted him power on earth and provided him with all kinds of means.
[18:85] When he completed his journey in one direction.
[18:86] He reached the far west; there he found the sun setting on a vast ocean and found a community there. We said, "O Zul-Qarnain, you can rule as you wish, either punish or be kind to them."
[18:87] He said, "As for those who transgress, We will punish them, then, when they return to their Sustainer, He will commit them to just retribution.
[18:88] "As for those who believe in His guidance and lead a righteous life, they will receive a good reward. We will treat them kindly."
[18:89] Then he travelled in the opposite direction.
[18:90] When he reached the far east, he found the sun rising on people who had nothing to shelter them from it.
[18:91] We were at all times fully aware of everything he discovered.
[18:92] He then pursued a different direction.
[18:93] When he reached the valley between two mountains, he found people whose language he barely understood.

CORRUPTION DESTROYED

[18:94] They said, "O Zul-Qarnain, Gog and Magog are corruptors of the earth. Can we pay you to create a barrier between us and them?"
[18:95] He said, "My Sustainer has given me great abilities. If you cooperate with me, I will build a barrier between you and them.
[18:96] "Bring to me masses of iron." Once he filled the gap between the two mountains, he said, "Blow." Once it was red hot, he said, "Help me pour this molten metal to seal it."
[18:97] Thus, Gog and Magog could not climb it nor could they bore holes in the barrier.
[18:98] He said, "This is mercy from my Sustainer. When the promise of my Sustainer comes to pass, He will cause the dam to crumble. The promise of my Sustainer is true."
[18:99] At that time, We will let them rise against one another then when the end is signalled, We will summon them all together.
[18:100] We will present the torment, on that day, to the disbelievers.
[18:101] They are the ones whose eyes were too veiled to see My message of guidance. Nor did they hear anything and behaved as if deaf.

[18:102] Do those who disbelieve think that they can get away with setting up My servants as authorities to equal or rival Me? We have prepared for the disbelievers a torment that is everlasting.[540]

EXAMINE YOUR LIFE: MANY PEOPLE DELUDE THEMSELVES

[18:103] Say: "Shall I tell you who the worst losers are?
[18:104] "They are the ones whose works in this life totally conflict with this guidance but they think that they are on the right path."
[18:105] Such are the ones who disbelieved in the guidance of their Sustainer and in meeting Him. Therefore, their works are in vain and on the Day of Resurrection, they will have no substance in their deeds.
[18:106] Their just requital is the torment of hell, in return for their disbelief in this guidance and for mocking My guidance and My messengers.
[18:107] As for those who follow this guidance and do good work, they have deserved a harmonious future as their abode.
[18:108] Forever they abide therein and they will never want any other as substitute.

THE QURAN: THE COMPLETE GUIDANCE

[18:109] Say: "If the ocean were ink for the words of my Sustainer, the ocean would run out, before the words of my Sustainer run out, even if We double the ink supply."[541]
[18:110] Say: "I am no more than a human like you, being inspired that your God is the One God. Those who hope to meet their Sustainer shall work righteousness and never serve any other authority to rival or equal the One who sustains them."[542]

[540] **The torment** is in fact a hell of their own making and awaits those who do not follow God's guidance, it is the consequence of their own work. See verses and footnotes 12:106; 18:32.
[541] **The Quran** is complete and detailed in everything that God wants to impart to us. To make legislation, rules, regulations etc. within the Quranic principles is acceptable but to add, remove or amend anything from the Quran decrees is not. Had God wanted He could have done it and He is not short of words. So don't place restrictions, innovate traditions and rituals that conflict with Quranic values. See verses and footnotes 16:116; 31:27. See also verses 6:114; 16:116.
[542] **Divine attributes** should not be given to God's messenger who is, as this verse clearly shows, nothing more than a human being. To ascribe anything more than humanity to him is to deflect from his purpose which was to deliver the message and be a guiding example. See verses 7:188, 28:56, 33;37, 41:6, 46:9, 60:12, 72:21, 80:1-12. **God's name to be invoked:** Before reading the Quran 16:98. Before eating 16:118-119. When planning anything for the future 18:23-24. When preparing to slaughter a sacrificial animal 22:36.

Sura 19: Mary (Maryam)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[19:1] K. H. Y. A. S.
[19:2] This is a narration about your Sustainer's mercy towards His servant Zachariah.
[19:3] He called out to his Sustainer and made a private supplication.
[19:4] He said, "My Sustainer, my bones have turned brittle in my body and my hair has turned grey. As I implore You, my Sustainer, I never despair.
[19:5] "I worry about my dependants after me and my wife is unable to have children. Grant me from You an heir.[543]
[19:6] "Let him be my heir and the heir of Jacob's family and make him, my Sustainer, acceptable to you."
[19:7] "O Zachariah, We give you good news: a son whose name shall be John. We give him insight and abilities like none before him."
[19:8] He said, "My Sustainer, will I have a son despite my wife's sterility and my old age?"
[19:9] He said, "Thus said your Sustainer: `It is easy for Me to do. I created you before that and you were nothing.' "
[19:10] He said, "My Sustainer, give me a sign." He said, "You will restrain yourself as a sign, and you will not speak to your family for three consecutive nights."[544]
[19:11] He came out to his family, from the sanctuary and signalled to them: "Reflect by meditation on God's guidance day and night."

JOHN: AN EXAMPLE FOR MANKIND

[19:12] "O John, you shall uphold God's guidance strongly." We endowed him with wisdom, even in his youth.
[19:13] And We endowed him with kindness and purity from Us, for he was a righteous person.[545]
[19:14] He honoured both his parents and was never arrogant or rebellious.
[19:15] Peace be upon him the day he was born, the day he died and the day he is resurrected back to life.

[543] **A sterile person** can be made fertile and now science has made this procedure available to many childless couples of all ages - all through the ordinance of God.
[544] **Restraint and discipline:** a period of reflection and meditation to strengthen resolve and conviction. Zachariah did not speak to his family about this matter during this period.
[545] **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*). Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. See verse 2:43 and footnote.

MARY RECEIVES NEWS OF A SON

[19:16] Mention in the scripture Mary. She isolated herself from her family, into an eastern location.
[19:17] While behind a barrier in seclusion from them, We directed to her Our Ruh in the appearance of a human being so not to make her fearful.[546]
[19:18] She said with some anxiety, "I seek refuge in the Most Gracious, that you may be righteous."
[19:19] He said, "I am a messenger from your Sustainer, to grant you a son, pure in character."[547]
[19:20] She said, "How can I have a son when no man has touched me, and I have never been unchaste."
[19:21] He said, "Thus said your Sustainer, `It is easy for Me. We will render him a sign for all the people and a mercy from Us. This is a matter consistent with Our ordinance.'"[548]

THE BIRTH OF JESUS, SON OF MARY

[19:22] When she was about to give birth, she isolated herself to a secluded place.
[19:23] She started to give birth when she was by a palm tree. She said, "I wish I was dead before this happened and completely forgotten."[549]
[19:24] Her child cried, hearing him, she did not grieve. Her Sustainer provided her with a flowing stream nearby for water.
[19:25] She shook the trunk of the palm tree, ripe dates fell beside her.
[19:26] She ate the dates and drank the water and was consoled. When she met anyone, she signified her Self-restraint and abstinence from speaking.

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[546] **Ruh is the energy from God.** In this case a malaika in the form of a man. See verse 4:171.

[547] **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*). Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. To keep intention and actions pure is essential. See verse 2:43 and footnote.

[548] **Mary** is a young woman with full knowledge that she cannot conceive without a man and that the system of God does not change. If Mary's conception is a miracle, then so must be that of Zachariah's wife and the creation of Adam. But everything happens by God's ordinance, not miracles. A significant point to note is verse 6:101. God cannot have a son without a consort, can we then assume that in contradiction with this principle, Mary had a son without a husband? God clearly says that His methods (including the way He creates) do not change. [Verse 30:30]. A miracle is only a miracle if it is witnessed, and a conception of a child does not generally have witnesses. And did people around her not question her months of obvious pregnancy, especially if out of wedlock? We expect righteous people to live by high principles. Mary, an exemplary woman above all women, [verse 3:42] would not have violated her values or gone against the decrees of God. Speculation is no substitute for the truth. We can say that no husband is mentioned, but that does not preclude marriage and a husband. Similarly, while the mother of Moses is mentioned, his father is not, but we do not infer that Moses did not have a father. See verses and footnotes: 3:42-60; 6:101; 30:30; 36:82.

[549] **Immaculate conception:** It should be questioned that did God suspend his laws of procreation and no one was aware of it at the time it happened? The Quran confirms that Mary gave birth like all women, and while this was an event that could possibly have been witnessed by some people, it is clear from this verse that it was not a miracle. So why do people think that the conception was a miracle when it is improbable - no, impossible - that there were any credible witnesses to it?

She had made a vow of silence to the One Most Gracious and did not talk to anyone about the event of that day. "[550]

JESUS APPOINTED TO FULFIL HIS COMMITMENTS

[19:27] She came to her family, carrying her child. They said, "O Mary, you have done something that was totally unexpected of you.
[19:28] "You are from the family of Aaron, your father was not a bad man nor was your mother unchaste."
[19:29] She pointed to the child. They said, "How can we talk with an infant in the crib?"[551]
[19:30] The child spoke and said, "I am a servant of God. He has given me the guidance and has appointed me a messenger.
[19:31] "He made me a gifted person wherever I go and decreed for me to fulfil my commitments and keep them pure for as long as I live.[552]
[19:32] "I am to honour my mother and He did not make me arrogant or rebellious.
[19:33] "And peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die and the day I get resurrected."
[19:34] That was Jesus, the son of Mary and this is the truth of this matter, about which they continue to doubt.

GOD DOES NOT BEGET

[19:35] It does not befit God that He begets a son, be He glorified. To have anything done, He simply says to it, "Be." and it is.[553]
[19:36] Jesus proclaimed, "God is my Sustainer and your Sustainer, you shall serve Him alone. This is the right path."
[19:37] The various parties dispute this among themselves. Therefore, misery to those who disbelieve that there will be an overwhelming conclusion.
[19:38] Wait till you hear them and see them when they come to face Us. The corrupt on that day will be totally lost.

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[550] **Abstain,** Self-restraint, Self-discipline. (Arabic. *sawma.* Root: S'W'M). As an act of Self discipline, Mary showed great restraint in keeping her vow of silence, which was specifically meant not speaking about her child Jesus. See verse and footnote: 2:183.

[551] **One characteristic** of gifted children is advanced language ability, and Jesus was undoubtedly an exceptionally gifted child that he spoke at an early age. Although it should be noted his age is not mentioned in the Quran, he was probably much older than he is normally accredited with. See verse 5:110.

[552] **Commitments** (Arabic: *solaa*) of Jesus who confirms that he has to fulfil the responsibility given to him by God. **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*). Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. See verse 2:43 and footnote.

[553] **How does God create life?** See verses and footnotes: 3:59; 36:82.

[19:39] Warn them about the day of anguish, when judgment will be issued. Today they are totally oblivious, they do not believe in this guidance.
[19:40] We are the ones who inherit the earth and everyone on it, to Us everyone will be returned.

ABRAHAM: A ROLE MODEL

[19:41] Cite in this book about Abraham, he was truthful and a messenger.
[19:42] He said to his father, "O my father, why do you worship what can neither hear, nor see, nor help you in any way?
[19:43] "Dear father, I have received certain knowledge that you did not receive. Follow me and I will guide you in a straight and balanced path.
[19:44] "My father, do not worship that which is evil. The degenerates have rebelled against the Most Gracious.
[19:45] "My father, I fear lest you incur punishment from the Most Gracious, then become an ally of these demons."
[19:46] He said, "Have you forsaken my gods, O Abraham? Unless you stop, I will stone you. Leave me alone."[554]
[19:47] Abraham said, "Salamun Alaika: Peace be upon you. I will implore my Sustainer to protect you. He has been most kind to me.[555]
[19:48] "I will leave you and the gods you worship instead of serving God. I will serve only the One who sustains me. By serving my Sustainer alone, I cannot go wrong."
[19:49] Because Abraham left his people and abandoned the authorities they set up to rival God, We granted him Isaac and Jacob and We made each of them a messenger.
[19:50] We showered them with Our mercy and We granted them great esteem.

MOSES, ISMAIL AND IDRIS

[19:51] Declare in this book about Moses. He was devoted to serving God and he was a messenger-envoy.[556]
[19:52] We called him from the right side of the mountain. We brought him close in communion.
[19:53] And We granted him out of Our mercy his brother Aaron as a messenger to support him.

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[554] **Stoning** as a punishment is not decreed in the Quran. In the Quran stoning is only carried out by pagans, disbelievers and those who reject this guidance. See verse 11:91.
[555] **Peace be upon you.** (Arabic: *salamun alaika.* Singular. *salamun alaikum.* plural). Greeting approved by God. See verse and footnote 6:54. **Abraham,** it appears, is interceding on his father's behalf, but God tells us that in this Abraham is not a good example, however, Abraham concedes that he has no power to save his own father from God's retribution. See verse 60:4.
[556] **Messenger-envoy:** (Arabic: *rasulan-nabiyal*). See verses and footnotes 7:157.

[19:54] In the book also proclaim about Ismail. He was truthful when he made a promise and he was a messenger-envoy.
[19:55] He used to advise his family to observe their commitments and keep them pure. His work was accepted by his Sustainer.
[19:56] And mention in the scripture Idris. He was truthful and a messenger.
[19:57] We raised him to an honourable status.
[19:58] These are some of the messengers whom God blessed. They were chosen from among the descendants of Adam and the descendants of those whom We carried with Noah and the descendants of Abraham and Israel and from among those whom We selected and guided. When this revelation, the guidance of the Most Gracious is recited to them, they concede without hesitation, overwhelmed with humility.

DON'T FORGET YOUR DUTY

[19:59] After them, He substituted successive generations who subsequently forgot their commitments and pursued their lusts. They will suffer the consequences of their works.
[19:60] Only those who repent, follow this guidance and lead a life of good works will enter a continued state of harmony, without the least injustice.[557]
[19:61] The gardens of tranquility await them, as promised by the Most Gracious for those who serve Him, even in their privacy. Certainly, His promise must come to pass.
[19:62] They will not hear any absurdities therein, only peace. They receive their sustenance therein, day and night.
[19:63] Such is the life of harmony, We grant it to those among Our servants who do good works.
[19:64] The malaika do not come down except by the command of your Sustainer. To Him belongs your past, your future and everything between. Your Sustainer is never forgetful.
[19:65] The Sustainer of the heavens and the earth and everything between them. You shall serve Him and steadfastly persevere in serving Him. Do you know of anyone who equals Him?

THIS LIFE CONTINUES

[19:66] The human being asks, "After I die, do I come back to life?"
[19:67] Have you forgotten that We created you in the first place, when you were nothing?

[557] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.

[19:68] By your Sustainer, We will certainly summon them, together with their devilish companions and We will gather them around hell, a humiliating torment.
[19:69] Then We will pick out from each group the most ardent antagonist of the Most Gracious.
[19:70] We know full well those who are most deserving of burning in there.
[19:71] Every individual will see the torment. This is an irrevocable ordinance of your Sustainer.
[19:72] Then We exalt the righteous and leave the transgressors to suffer a humiliating tribulation.

MONEY AND POWER, WITHOUT GUIDANCE, DETRIMENTAL

[19:73] When Our clear guidance is recited to them, those who reject it, say to those who believe, "Which of us is more prosperous? Which of us is in the majority?"
[19:74] Many a generation We have annihilated before them. They were more powerful and more prosperous.
[19:75] Say: "Those who choose to go astray, the Most Gracious will allow them free reign, until they see what is promised for them - the punishment on the hour of judgment. That is when they find out who really is worse off and weaker in power."
[19:76] God augments the guidance of those who choose to be guided. For the good deeds are eternally enduring with your Sustainer and bring far better rewards.
[19:77] Have you noticed the one who rejected Our guidance? Then confidently said, "I will have money and children"
[19:78] Has he seen the future? Has he taken such a pledge from the Most Gracious?
[19:79] Indeed, We will record what he says, then commit him to ever-increasing punishment.
[19:80] We then inherit everything he possessed and he comes back to Us all alone, without money or children.
[19:81] They serve beside God as equals other authorities that they think may be of help to them.
[19:82] In fact conversely these false authorities will reject their idolization and will be their enemies.
[19:83] Do you not see how We unleash their own demons upon the disbelievers to rouse them up?
[19:84] Do not be impatient, We have prepared for them just recompense.
[19:85] The day will come when We summon the righteous before the Most Gracious in a good company.
[19:86] And We will herd the guilty into suffering, to be their eternal destination.

[19:87] No one possesses any power to intercede. Those whose works have conformed to the laws of the Most Gracious are granted their rightful place.[558]

A DISGRACEFUL BLASPHEMY

[19:88] They say, "The Most Gracious has begotten a son."
[19:89] You have uttered a blasphemy most offensive.
[19:90] The heavens are about to shatter, the earth is about to tear asunder and the mountains are about to crumble upon hearing such a contemptible claim.
[19:91] Because they claim that the Most Gracious has begotten a son.
[19:92] It is not befitting the Most Gracious that He should beget a son.
[19:93] Every single one in the heavens and the earth is a servant of the Most Gracious.
[19:94] He has encompassed them and has counted them one by one.
[19:95] All of them will come before Him on the Day of Resurrection as individuals.
[19:96] Surely, those who believe in this guidance and lead a righteous life, the Most Gracious will manifest on them great care.
[19:97] We thus made this recitation very easy in your language, in order to deliver good news to those who wish to protect themselves from lasting harm and to warn with it their opponents.[559]
[19:98] Many a generation before them We annihilated, can you see any of them or hear any sound, or even a cry from them?

[558] **The myth** of intercession is exposed. If you have lived according to God's guidance, the harmonious future is your right and no-one needs to intercede on your behalf. Intercession is undeserved favouritism. See verses and footnotes 2:254.

[559] **The Quran** was revealed in Arabic as the original recipients of this message were Arabic speaking people. Now the Quran's message can be, and should be translated to reach all the people around the world. As stated in verse 2:2 the Quran is a book of *guidance* and it can only be of use, and fit for purpose, if it can be understood by children, every Jan and Joe Bloggs, as well as the academics and doctors of knowledge. It should be in every library, book case and on every bedside table, close to hand, accessible, readable and easy to learn from and understand. See verse 14:4. See verses and footnotes 2:185. See also **Arabic** that you may understand 12:2. laws 13:37; pure, clear 16:103; revealed in Arabic 20:113; clear language 26:195. Arabic or non-Arabic 26:198; 41:44. without crookedness 39:28. Quran for knowledgeable 41:3. to warn prominent community 42:7. that you may understand 43:3. confirms and warns in 46:12. **We made this Quran a reminder, easy for you. Have any of you learned anything?** Repeated four times. See verses 54:17; 54:22; 54:32; 54:40.

Sura 20: Ta Ha (Ta Ha)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[20:1] T. H.
[20:2] We did not reveal the Quran to cause you any distress.
[20:3] Only to remind those who reflect on the future.
[20:4] A revelation from the creator of the earth and the high heavens.
[20:5] The Most Gracious, He has total authority over all things.
[20:6] To Him belongs everything in the heavens and the earth, and everything between them and everything beneath the ground.
[20:7] He knows your declared convictions and your secrets and what is even more hidden.
[20:8] The One God: there is no other authority to equal or rival Him. To Him belong the most compelling attributes.

MOSES ON MOUNT TUWA

[20:9] Have you noted the history of Moses?[560]
[20:10] When he saw a distant fire, he said to his family, "Stay here, I have seen a fire. Maybe I can bring you some of it or find some guidance at the fire."
[20:11] When he came to it, he heard a call, "O, Moses.
[20:12] "I am your Sustainer, remove your sandals. You are in the revered valley of Tuwa.
[20:13] "I have chosen you, so listen to what is being revealed.
[20:14] "I am the One God, there is no other authority equal to Me. You shall serve Me alone and observe your commitments and keep your duty to Me.

MOSES: NO ONE KNOWS THE HOUR

[20:15] "The Hour, when this world comes to an end is surely coming. I keep it beyond your knowledge, for each Self must receive its reward by the measure of its endeavour.
[20:16] "Do not be diverted from the guidance by those who do not believe in it and those who pursue their own opinions, lest you fall from grace.
[20:17] "What is this in your right hand, Moses?"
[20:18] He said, "This is my staff. I lean on it, herd my sheep with it and I use it for other needs."
[20:19] He said, "Throw it down, Moses."
[20:20] He threw it down, whereupon it appeared as a moving serpent.
[20:21] He said, "Pick it up, do not be afraid. We will return it to its original state.

[560] **History:** (Arabic: *hadith*). Read more of the history of Moses in Sura 17:1-12 & 28:2-55. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.

[20:22] "And hold your hand under your wing, it will come out white without a blemish, another sign.
[20:23] "We thus show you some of Our great signs.
[20:24] "Go to Firawn, for he is corrupt."
[20:25] Moses said, "My Sustainer, cool my temper.
[20:26] "And make this task easy for me.
[20:27] "And stop my stammer that impedes me.
[20:28] "So they can understand my speech.
[20:29] "And appoint an assistant for me from my family.
[20:30] "My brother Aaron.
[20:31] "Strengthen me with him.
[20:32] "Let him be my partner in this matter.
[20:33] "That We may exalt You by serving You.
[20:34] "And commemorate You frequently.
[20:35] "You are the Seer of us."
[20:36] He said, "Your request is granted, O Moses.
[20:37] "We have gifted to you once again.

MOSES CAST INTO THE RIVER

[20:38] "When We inspired your mother with Our guidance.
[20:39] "Saying: `Place him into the cradle then float him into the river. The river will take him to the shore to be picked up by an opponent of Mine and an enemy of his.' I bestowed you with care from Me and I had you nurtured under My watch.
[20:40] "Your sister walked to them and said, `I know about a nursing mother who can take good care of him.' We thus returned you to your mother, that she may be contented and stop distressing. And when you killed somebody, We saved you from the grievous consequences. Indeed We tested you thoroughly. You stayed many years with the people of Midyan and now you are ready and have come back in accordance with My specific plan.

MOSES PREPARED FOR HIS MISSION

[20:41] "I have equipped you just for this work, according to my purpose.
[20:42] "Go with your brother, supported by My signs and do not hesitate in fulfilling your duty to Me.
[20:43] "Go to Firawn, for he has transgressed.
[20:44] "Speak to him with a gentle manner, he may take heed or become reverent."
[20:45] They said, "Our Sustainer, we fear lest he may attack us or he may oppress us."
[20:46] God said, "Do not be afraid, for I will be with you, listening and watching.

[20:47] "Go to him and say, `We are two messengers from your Sustainer. Let the Children of Israel go. You must refrain from persecuting them. We bring a sign from your Sustainer and peace belongs to those who heed the guidance.
[20:48] "`We have been inspired that the retribution will inevitably afflict those who disbelieve in the guidance and turn away.' "

MOSES MEETS FIRAWN

[20:49] Firawn said, "Who is your Sustainer, O Moses?"
[20:50] Moses said, "Our Sustainer is the One who granted everything its existence and its direction."
[20:51] He said, "What about the past generations?"
[20:52] He said, "That knowledge is with my Sustainer in a record. My Sustainer never errs, nor does He forget.[561]
[20:53] "He is the One who made the earth habitable for you and paved in it roads for you. And He sends down from the sky water with which we produce pairs of many diverse kinds of plants."[562]
[20:54] Eat and raise your livestock. These are sufficient proofs for those who possess intelligence.
[20:55] From it We created you, into it We return you and from it We bring you out once more.
[20:56] We showed him many of Our signs but he rejected them and disbelieved.
[20:57] He said, "Did you come here to expel us out of our land with your magic, O Moses?
[20:58] "We will surely show you similar magic. Therefore, set an appointment that neither we nor you will breach, in a place convenient to us both."
[20:59] He said, "Your appointed time shall be the day of festivities. Let us all meet in the forenoon.

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[561] **God's methods** to record and measure are known only to Him but this verse clearly sets out that He never makes a mistake or misjudges. His decrees about food, clothing, values etc. are accurate and without errors or omissions. If He has left something out, it's deliberate, just as when he specifies something it's calculated and purposeful. Nobody but the impudent will add to or ignore what God has decreed in His guidance. See verses 4:60; 13:37; 16:116; 40:84; 42:21.

[562] **Sexuality (pairs) in plants.** Many plants have both male and female parts, others only have male or female parts and still other plants have flowers on the same plant that are a mix of male and female flowers. Some plants even have mixes that include all three types of flowers, where some flowers are only male, some are only female and some are both male and female. It was Christian Sprengel, a German theologist and naturalist who discovered sexuality in plant life circa 1790. For this discovery he was ridiculed as the very thought of sexuality amongst plants was at the time considered to be obscene. However, the Quran declared this seemingly absurd statement more than a thousand years before. Something that the whole world thought was bizarre turned out to be an verifiable scientific fact. See verse and footnote 13:3; 36:36.

MOSES AND THE MAGICIANS

[20:60] Firawn summoned his forces then came to the appointed place.
[20:61] Moses said to them, "Shame on you. Do you fabricate lies to oppose God and thus incur His retribution? Such fabricators will surely fail."
[20:62] They disputed among themselves as they conferred privately.
[20:63] They said, "These two are no more than sorcerers who wish to drive you out of your land with their magic and to destroy your good way of life.
[20:64] "Let us agree upon one scheme and face them as a united front. The one who has the upper hand will surely succeed."
[20:65] They said, "O Moses, either you throw or let us be the first to throw."
[20:66] He said, "You throw first." Whereupon, their ropes and sticks appeared to him, because of their clever illusion, as if they were moving.
[20:67] Moses felt some panic within himself.
[20:68] God said, "Have no fear. You will prevail.
[20:69] "Throw what you hold in your right hand and it will swallow what they fabricated. What they fabricated is no more than the illusion of a performer. The magicians' work will not succeed."

THE MAGICIANS ARE PROVEN FALSE

[20:70] The magicians fell in submission, saying, "We believe in the One who sustains Aaron and Moses."
[20:71] Firawn said, "Did you believe in him without my permission? He must be your leader, the one who taught you magic. I will surely sever your hands and feet on alternate sides. I will crucify you on the palm trunks. You will find out which of us can inflict the worst punishment and who outlasts whom."
[20:72] They said, "We will not prefer you over the clear proofs that came to us and over the One who created us. Therefore, issue whatever judgment you wish to issue. You can only rule in this ordinary life.
[20:73] "We have believed in our Sustainer so that He may protect us from our wrongdoings and the magic that you forced us to perform. God is far better and everlasting."
[20:74] Anyone who comes to his Sustainer condemned as guilty will incur the torment of hell wherein he never dies nor lives.
[20:75] As for those who come to Him as believers in the guidance who had led a righteous life, they attain high ranks.
[20:76] The gardens of tranquillity in which rivers flow will be their abode forever. Such is the reward for those who purify themselves.

MOSES LEADS HIS PEOPLE ACROSS THE WATER

[20:77] We inspired Moses: "Lead My servants to freedom and set forth for them a dry path across the water. You shall not fear that you may get caught, nor shall you agonize."

[20:78] Firawn pursued them with his troops but the water overwhelmed them as it was designed to devastate them.
[20:79] Thus, Firawn misled his people, he did not guide them.
[20:80] O Children of Israel, We delivered you from your enemy and made a covenant on the mountain side and We sent down to you manna and quails.
[20:81] Eat from the good things We provided for you and do not transgress from the limits, lest you incur My wrath. Whoever incurs My wrath has fallen from grace.
[20:82] I am surely the protector for those who repent, believe in this guidance, lead a righteous life and steadfastly persevere.[563]

THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL ARE ANTAGONISTIC

[20:83] "Why did you hurry away from your people, O Moses?"
[20:84] He said, "They are close behind me. I have rushed to You my Sustainer, that You may be pleased."
[20:85] God said, "We have put your people to the test after you left but the Samarian misled them."
[20:86] Moses returned to his people, angry and disappointed, saying, "O my people, did your Sustainer not assure you with a good promise? Could you not wait? Did you want to incur wrath from your Sustainer? Is this why you broke your promise with me?"
[20:87] They said, "We did not break our promise with you on purpose. But as we were loaded down with jewellery, we decided to throw our lot in. This is what the Samarian suggested."
[20:88] The Samarian produced for them a sculpted calf, complete with sound and said, "This is your God and the God of Moses." Thus the Samarian neglected the truth.[564]
[20:89] Could they not see that even then it neither responded to them, nor possessed any power to harm them or benefit them?
[20:90] And Aaron had told them, "O my people, this is a test for you. Your only sustainer is the Most Gracious, so follow me and obey my commands."
[20:91] They said, "We will continue to devote our worship to it until Moses comes back."

MOSES RETURNS AND FINDS CHAOS

[20:92] Moses said, "O Aaron, what is it that prevented you, when you saw them go astray,
[20:93] "from following my orders? Have you rebelled against me?"
[20:94] He said, "O my brother, do not pull me by my beard and my head. I was afraid that you might say, `You have divided the Children of Israel and disobeyed my orders.' "[565]

[563] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.
[564] **A calf** complete with sound. See verse and footnote 7:148.

[20:95] Moses said, "What is the matter with you, O Samarian?"
[20:96] He said, "I saw what they could not see. I grabbed a fistful of dust from the place where a messenger had stood and used it to consecrate the calf. This is what I thought I should do."
[20:97] He said, "Then go and throughout your life do not even come close to me. You have an appointed time for your final judgment, that you can never evade. Look at your god that you have worshipped. We will burn it and throw it into the river, to stay down there forever."

THERE IS NO AUTHORITY EQUAL TO GOD

[20:98] Your only God is the One God. The One beside whom there is no other authority to rival or equal Him. His knowledge encompasses all things.
[20:99] We thus narrate to you some history from the past generations. We have revealed this to you as a reminder from Us.
[20:100] Those who disregard it will bear the weight of wickedness on the Day of Resurrection.
[20:101] Eternally they suffer therein. What a miserable load on the Day of Reckoning.
[20:102] That is the day signified by a sound and We assemble the guilty filled with terror.
[20:103] Whispering among themselves they will say, "You have lived on earth no more than a few days"
[20:104] We are fully aware of their utterances. The most accurate among them will say, "You lived, but no more than a day."
[20:105] They ask you about the mountains. Say: "My Sustainer will wipe them out.
[20:106] "He will leave all the land barren and flat.
[20:107] "Not even the smallest hill will you see there, nor a trench."
[20:108] On that day, everyone will follow the caller, without the slightest deviation. All sounds will be silenced before the Most Gracious. You will hear nothing but whispers.
[20:109] On that day, intercession will not be accepted, except that which coincides with the ordinance of the Most Gracious and whose works have conformed with His law.[566]

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[565] **Beards** were, as they are now, common in times and cultures where they were fashionable or shaving was not a practical every day event. However, religious traditionalists today insist that to keep a beard is an act of piety that earns rewards and is a label of intent for Muslims so that they can be recognised as such. If this indeed was the case, then many native Americans, most Inuit in the Arctic and women would lose out on the virtues of keeping a beard as these groups of people do not have any androgenic hair. The Quran says all believing men and women are equal and it is only the acts of righteousness that define exalted characters. While they may add to your image, beards of any style, length or colour are therefore of no consequence in determining your sincerity or integrity as a muslim and are certainly not obligatory as an act of belief. See verses 9:72-73; 33:35.
[566] **Intercession** is undeserved favouritism. See corresponding footnote to verse 2:254.

[20:110] He knows their past and their future, while none encompasses His knowledge.
[20:111] All faces humble themselves to the Living, the Eternal and those who are burdened by their transgressions will fail.
[20:112] As for those who worked righteousness while believing in this guidance, they will have no fear of injustice or adversity.

[20:113] We revealed this, an Arabic Quran, and We cited in it all kinds of warnings that they may be saved or it may cause them to take heed.
[20:114] Most Exalted is God, the only true Sovereign. Do not make haste into uttering the Quran before it is completed and say, "My Sustainer, increase my knowledge."
[20:115] We tested Adam in the past but he forgot and We found him faltering.[567]
[20:116] Recall that We said to the malaika, "Yield before Adam." They all consented, except shaitan, he refused.
[20:117] We then said, "O Adam, this is an enemy of you and your wife. Do not let him be the cause of your eviction from this harmony, lest you become miserable.
[20:118] "There are enough provisions that you will never hunger therein, nor go unsheltered.
[20:119] "Nor will you thirst therein, nor suffer from any heat."
[20:120] But the shaitan, his egotistic Self, deluded him into saying: "I think I can branch out like a tree with my progeny and rule over this domain in a life that never diminishes."
[20:121] They tasted awareness of grandeur and then became self-conscience and shameful of what they had schemed, and they then tried to cover-up their misdeed. Adam had thus disobeyed his Sustainer and fell from grace.
[20:122] Subsequently his Sustainer chose him, redeemed him and guided him.
[20:123] He said, "Go down there on earth, all of you. You are in conflict with one another. When guidance comes to you from Me, anyone who follows My guidance will not go adrift nor suffer any misery.[568]

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[567] **Adam's** shaitan: his egotistical Self: See verses and footnotes 2:30-39; 68:48.
[568] **The human body** survives by taking air, food, drink etc. By its very nature it is lustful, greedy, selfish, gluttonous and avaricious. The Self fights an ongoing battle with the Ego - its negative aspect which seeks to fulfil the material and physical desires - in its endeavour to be munificent and realise its potential and develop, it seeks to be benevolent, philanthropic, generous, giving and eager for self-sacrifice. Both are in a constant battle and it is the strong willed Self that creates a balance between the two. With self-discipline underpinned by Permanent Values it sets its Self on a straight and balanced path avoiding all that is detrimental and anything that causes lasting harm. To win this conflict is a great victory and achievement and a feeling of satisfaction of having moved towards fulfilling one's potential. See verses 25:43; 26:98.

A MISERABLE FUTURE FOR THE REJECTERS

[20:124] "As for the one who disregards My message, he will have a miserable life and We resurrect him on the Day of Reckoning as blind."
[20:125] He will say, "My Sustainer, why did you summon me like the blind, when I used to be a seer?"
[20:126] He will say, "Because you neglected Our guidance when it came to you, so now you are abandoned."
[20:127] We thus punish those who transgress and refuse to believe in this guidance of their Sustainer. The punishment in the life yet to come is far worse and everlasting.
[20:128] Does it ever occur to them how many previous generations We have annihilated? They are now walking in the homes of those before them. These are signs for those who possess intelligence.
[20:129] If it were not for your Sustainer's plan ordained, they would have been judged immediately.
[20:130] Therefore, be patient in the face of their utterances and celebrate and magnify your Sustainer before sunrise and before sunset. And during the night exalt Him, as well as between both ends of the day, that you may be contented.[569]
[20:131] And do not yearn for what We bestowed upon any other people. Such are the temporary ornaments of this life whereby We put them to the test. What your Sustainer provides for you is far better and everlasting.

INSTIL GOOD VALUES IN YOUR CHILDREN

[20:132] You shall exhort your family to observe their commitments and steadfastly persevere in doing so. We do not ask you for any provisions, We are the ones who provide for you. The ultimate triumph belongs to those who safeguard their righteousness. [570]
[20:133] They said, "If only he could show us a miracle from his Sustainer" Did they not receive sufficient signs with the previous messages?[571]
[20:134] Had We annihilated them before this, they would have said, "Our Sustainer, had You sent a messenger to us, we would have followed Your guidance and would have avoided this shame and humiliation."
[20:135] Say: "All of us are waiting, so wait too. You will surely find out who are on the correct path and who are truly guided."

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[569] **Doing good** works, fulfilling our commitments and obligations makes us content and by carrying out our duty to God, we magnify Him and celebrate the life he has gifted us by living it to the full. See verses 21:20; 2:30.
[570] **Following** your parents blindly is one of the greatest human tragedies. Not long after your birth, they decide your name, nationality, religion and sect. And you spend the rest of your life defending something you did not even choose. See verse 37:74.
[571] **God** does not perform miracles, His signs are manifest according to His ordinance.

Sura 21: The Messengers (Al-Anbya)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[21:1] Fast approaching is the reckoning for mankind but they are oblivious and averse to guidance.
[21:2] When a renewed reminder comes to them from their Sustainer, they listen to it heedlessly.
[21:3] Their minds are neglectful as the corrupt confer secretly: "Is he not just a human being like you? Would you accept the enchantment that is presented to you?"
[21:4] He said, "My Sustainer knows every thought in the heavens and the earth. He is the Hearer and aware of all things."
[21:5] They even said, "He has hallucinations," "He made it up," and, "He is a poet. Let him show us a miracle like those of the previous messengers."
[21:6] We never annihilated a believing community in the past. Are these people believers?
[21:7] We did not send before you except men whom We inspired. Ask those who know the scripture, if you do not know.
[21:8] We did not give them bodies that did not need food nor were they immortal.
[21:9] We fulfilled Our promise to them. We saved them together with those who believed, consistent with Our ordinance and annihilated the transgressors.
[21:10] We have sent down to you this scripture containing the message of guidance. Do you not understand?
[21:11] Many a community We terminated because of their transgression and We substituted other people in their place.
[21:12] When Our punishment came as promised, they started to run.
[21:13] Do not run away and come back to your luxuries and your mansions, for you must be held accountable.
[21:14] They said, "Misery to us. We were really wicked."
[21:15] They continued with their proclamation, until We completely wiped them out.

TRUTH CONQUERS FALSEHOOD

[21:16] We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them just for mere amusement.
[21:17] If We needed pleasure, We could have initiated it without creating any of this, if that is what We wanted to do.
[21:18] Instead, it is Our plan to launch the truth against falsehood in order to crush falsehood completely. Misery to you for the profanities that you speak.

[21:19] To Him belongs everyone in the heavens and the earth and those who know their duty to Him are never too arrogant to serve Him, nor do they ever falter.
[21:20] With their works they glorify Him night and day, without ever tiring.[572]

MANY GODS EQUAL MUCH CONFUSION

[21:21] Have they found gods on earth who can create?
[21:22] If there were other authorities to equal God, there would have been chaos. Glory be to God, the Sustainer with absolute authority. He is over and above any of their claims.[573]
[21:23] He is never to be questioned about anything He does, while He holds all to account.
[21:24] Have they found other authorities to equal Him? Say: "Show me your proof. This is a message of my generation, consummating all previous messages." Indeed, most of them do not recognize the truth, this is why they are so argumentative.

THE MYTH OF INTERCESSION EXPOSED

[21:25] We did not send any messenger before you except with the guidance: "There is no authority to rank with Me, you shall serve Me alone."
[21:26] Yet, they said, "God Most Gracious has begotten a son!" Glory be to Him. Those they call His sons are no more than His honoured servants.
[21:27] They never convey anything of their own whim and they strictly follow His commands.
[21:28] He knows their future and their past. They need not intercede on behalf of anyone, those who send forth their good deeds are already honoured by Him. The messengers worry about their own future.[574]
[21:29] If any one of them claims to be an authority equal or rival to God, We punish him with the torment of hell. We thus rebuke the wicked.

THE BIG BANG THEORY

[21:30] Do the unbelievers not realise that the heavens and the earth used to be one solid mass and that We initiated the explosion to split it asunder? And from water We made all living things. Would they then not believe?

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[572] **How can people glorify God?** Glorification, as this verse shows, is through good works underpinned by Quranic values. Willingly following and implementing His guidance is the best way to glorify and honour God. The more we accept Permanent Values that are self-imposed, the more free we are. This is why there is freedom of belief in the Quran. It is the commitment to these values that develop the Self. See verse 2:30 and footnote.
[573] **Trinity:** see verse and footnote 4:171.
[574] **Intercession** is undeserved favouritism. See verse and footnote 2:254. Messenger can be punished for wrongdoing. See verses 40:66, 69:40-52. See also 27:10-11.

[21:31] And We placed on earth stabilizers, lest it tumbles with them and We placed roads therein that they may be properly guided.
[21:32] And We rendered the sky a protecting ceiling. Yet, they are totally oblivious to all the signs therein.[575]
[21:33] And He is the One who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon, each moving in its determined orbit.[576]
[21:34] We never decreed immortality for anyone before you. If you die, are you immortal?
[21:35] Every person will taste death, after We put you to the test through adversity and prosperity, then to Us you ultimately return.
[21:36] When those who disbelieve see you, they deride you thus: "Is this the one who challenges your gods?" Meanwhile, they remain totally heedless of this guidance from the Most Gracious.
[21:37] The human being is impatient by nature. I will inevitably show you My signs, do not be in such a hurry.
[21:38] They challenge: "Where is this punishment? Tell us, if you are truthful"
[21:39] If only those who disbelieve could envision themselves when they try to ward off the fire, off their faces and their backs. No one will then help them.
[21:40] Indeed, it will come to them suddenly and they will be utterly stunned. They can neither avoid it nor can they receive any respite.
[21:41] Messengers before you have been ridiculed and consequently, those who ridiculed them incurred punishment for their contempt.
[21:42] Say: "Who can protect you from the Most Gracious during the night or during the day?" Indeed, they are totally oblivious to this guidance of their Sustainer.
[21:43] Do they have gods who can protect them from Us? They cannot even help themselves. Nor can they defend one another when they are summoned to face Us.

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[575] **The sky and earth's atmosphere** gives protection from many different risks. Cosmic rays from the sun and supernovas have the ability to shoot through your body and damage DNA. Gamma ray and X-ray radiation damages the body. Ultraviolet radiation from the sun can cause skin cancer. Violent explosions from the sun, the solar flares sends out bursts of plasma but we are protected by the magnetosphere. We are also protected from almost freezing temperatures that surrounds the earth in space as the earth's atmosphere acts like a blanket around us. These are just a few of the ways in which we are protected by the sky and the earth's atmosphere. See verse and footnote 16:106.

[576] **At first** the belief was that the earth was flat and now it is widely accepted that the moon orbits around the earth which is an oblate spheroid, and the earth orbits around the sun. Furthermore it is becoming clear that the sun and even our solar system are also moving in an orbit. Some scientists now believe we live in a universe that is a vortex. However, is it a surprise that the Quran mentions this? Who knows all this but the One who created them?

[21:44] We have provided for these people and their ancestors even up until their old age. Do they not see that each day on earth brings them closer to the end? Can they reverse this process?
[21:45] Say: "I am warning you in accordance with divine inspiration." However, those who have affected a deafness cannot hear the call when they are warned.
[21:46] When even a little of your Sustainer's retribution afflicts them, they readily admit, "We were indeed wicked."
[21:47] We will establish the scales of justice on the Day of Reckoning. No Self will suffer the least injustice. Even the equivalent of an atom or less will be accounted for. We are the most efficient Reckoner.

THE RIGHTEOUS KEEP THEIR DUTY EVEN WHEN ALONE

[21:48] We gave Moses and Aaron the Taurah: the Book of Law, a beacon and a reminding guidance for the righteous.
[21:49] The ones who keep their duty to their Sustainer, even when alone in their privacy, they worry about their accountability.
[21:50] This too is a profound reminder that We sent down. Are you denying it?

ABRAHAM SHOWS FUTILITY OF IDOL WORSHIP

[21:51] Before that We granted Abraham guidance and understanding, for We were fully aware of him.
[21:52] He said to his father and his people, "What are these statues to which you devote yourselves?"
[21:53] They said, "We found our parents worshipping them."
[21:54] He said, "Indeed, you and your parents have gone totally astray."
[21:55] They said, "Are you telling us the truth or are you mocking us?"
[21:56] He said, "Your only Sustainer is the One who sustains the heavens and the earth and He created them. This is the testimony to which I bear witness.
[21:57] "I swear by God, I have a plan to deal with your statues as soon as you leave."
[21:58] He broke them into pieces, except for a big one, that they may refer to it.
[21:59] They said, "Whoever did this to our gods is really a villain."
[21:60] They said, "We heard a youth threaten them. He is called Abraham."
[21:61] They said, "Bring him before the eyes of all the people, that they may bear witness."
[21:62] They said, "Did you do this to our gods, O Abraham?"

[21:63] He said, "It is that big one who did it. Go ask them, if they can speak."
[21:64] They were taken aback and said to each other, "Indeed, you are the ones who are the criminals."
[21:65] Yet, they reverted to their confused ideas and said to him: "You know full well that they cannot speak."
[21:66] He said, "Do you then serve besides God things that possess no power to benefit you or harm you?
[21:67] "You have incurred shame by serving others instead of serving God. Do you not understand?"

OBSERVING COMMITMENTS A PRIORITY

[21:68] They said, "Burn him and protect your gods, if this is what you decide to do."
[21:69] We said, "O fire, be cool and safe for Abraham."[577]
[21:70] Thus, they schemed against him but We made them the losers.
[21:71] We saved him and We saved Lot, to the land that We blessed for all the people.
[21:72] And We granted him Isaac and Jacob as a gift and We made them both righteous.
[21:73] We made them leaders who guided their people in accordance with Our commandments and We taught them how to work righteousness and how to observe their commitments and keep them pure. To Us, they were devoted servants.[578]

LOT SAVED FROM CORRUPT PEOPLE

[21:74] As for Lot, We granted him wisdom and knowledge and We saved him from a community that practiced abominations, they were wicked and evil people.
[21:75] We admitted him into Our mercy, for he was righteous.
[21:76] And before that Noah called and We responded to him. We saved him and his family from a great disaster.
[21:77] We supported him against the people who rejected Our guidance. They were wicked people, so all were drowned.

[577] **Why did Abraham** not burn in the fire? Just as ice can burn when touched - such as dry ice or sometimes called 'cardice' (solid carbon dioxide), it may be possible to give fire the property that it does not burn, i.e. fire that is cool or has a low temperature.
[578] **Commitments** (Arabic: *solaa*) of Isaac and Jacob. Throughout history, messengers of God and all the people have been explicitly instructed to establish their commitments and fulfil them. See footnote to verse 2:3.

DAVID AND SOLOMON HONOURED

[21:78] David and Solomon when they once ruled with regard to someone's crop that was destroyed by another's sheep, We witnessed their judgment.
[21:79] We granted Solomon better understanding, though We endowed both of them with wisdom and knowledge. We committed the mountains to serve David, as well as the birds. This is what We did.
[21:80] And We taught him the skill of making shields to protect them in war. Are you then thankful?
[21:81] For Solomon We subdued the winds, gusting and blowing at his disposal. He could direct it as he wished to whatever land he chose and We blessed such land for him. We are fully aware of all things.
[21:82] And of the workers who worked in secrecy. There were those who would dive for him to harvest the sea or do whatever else he commanded them to do. We committed them in his service.

THE MESSENGERS FACE CHALLENGES

[21:83] And Job implored his Sustainer: "Hard times have befallen me and of all the merciful ones You are the Most Merciful."
[21:84] We responded to him, relieved his adversity and restored his family for him, even twice as much. That was a mercy from Us and a reminder for those who serve Us.
[21:85] Also, Ismail, Idris, Zal-Kifl, all were steadfast and patient.
[21:86] We admitted them into Our mercy for they were righteous.
[21:87] And Jonah abandoned his mission in protest thinking that We had no power over him. He ended up imploring from the darkness of a whale "There is no authority to equal You. Be You glorified. I have committed a gross offence."
[21:88] We responded to him and saved him from this crisis. We thus save the believers.
[21:89] And Zachariah implored his Sustainer: "My Sustainer, do not keep me without an heir, though You are the best inheritor."
[21:90] We responded to him and granted him John from his wife whom We made fertile. That is because they used to hasten to work righteousness and were in gratitude to Us in situations of joy, as well as difficulty. To Us, they were reverent.

MARY AND JESUS: EXEMPLARY PERSONALITIES

[21:91] As for the one who maintained purity and righteousness, We inspired her from Our Ruh and thus We made her and her son a sign for all the world.[579]

[579] **Ruh** is the directive energy *from* God, but not *of* God. See verse 4:171.

ONE GOD, ONE COMMUNITY

[21:92] Your people are but one community and I alone am the One who Sustains you all and you shall serve Me alone.
[21:93] However, they divided themselves into disputing parties. All of them will return to Us for judgment.
[21:94] As for those who do good work, while believing in this guidance, their work will not go to waste. We are recording everything they do.

DO NOT SERVE ANYONE AS EQUAL WITH GOD

[21:95] There will be no return for any community We have annihilated.
[21:96] Not until Gog and Magog appear, then will they return and then come from every direction to face their torment.
[21:97] That is when the inevitable promise will come to pass and the disbelievers will stare in horror: "Misery to us. We have been oblivious. Indeed, we have been wicked."
[21:98] You and the authorities you served as rivals to God will be fuel for the torment of hell. This is your inevitable end.
[21:99] If those were gods, they would not have ended up in a state of hell. All its inhabitants abide in it forever.
[21:100] They will sigh and cry out therein and they will have no access to anything good.

THOSE IN A STATE OF HARMONY

[21:101] As for those who deserved Our magnificent rewards, they will be protected from anything dreadful.
[21:102] They will not hear the noise of the torment. They will enjoy an abode where they have everything they desire, forever.
[21:103] The great horror will not worry them and the malaika will receive them joyfully: "This is the day that has been promised to you."

THE END OF THIS UNIVERSE

[21:104] On that day, We will fold this astral structure like the folding of a book. Just as We initiated the first creation, We will repeat it. This is Our promise. We will certainly carry it out.[580]
[21:105] We have decreed in the Zabur scriptures, as well as in other reminders that the earth shall be inherited by My righteous servants.
[21:106] This is a complete message for people who willingly serve God,
[21:107] and We have not sent it except as a mercy from Us towards the whole world.[581]

[580] **The universe** is expanding and once a limit is reached it will contract and implode. See Verse 51:47; 69:13-18.
[581] **The Quran: a mercy from God.** See verses: 10:57; 17:82; 28:86.; 41:44.

[21:108] Proclaim, "I have been given divine inspiration that God is the One God. Will you now submit to Him and follow His guidance?"
[21:109] If they turn away, then say, "I have warned you sufficiently, but I have no idea how soon or late your end will come.[582]
[21:110] "God is fully aware of what you say in public and He is fully aware of everything you conceal and keep secret.
[21:111] "For I know this world is a trial for you to develop your Self and a temporary enjoyment."
[21:112] Say: "My Sustainer, Your judgment is the absolute truth. Our Sustainer is the Most Gracious, only His help we seek in the face of your claims."[583]

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[582] **Perceptive** people understand the lasting benefits of this guidance and will readily apply it in their lives and recognise that it is indeed a mercy from God. See verses 21:106-109.

[583] **Social Welfare:** It may seem striking at first, but we should not be surprised to learn that there is no charity decreed in the Quran. As always there is a very good reason for omitting something that on face value seems good but in actual fact is detrimental. Charity is the occasional voluntary donation of residual income or goods to the needy. It can be an act of pity to temporarily relieve the hardship of someone and makes the giver feel as if they have done something worthwhile. The Quran's decree is a more permanent solution with far-reaching effects. It propagates a social welfare system to help those in genuine need.

The Quranic concept of *ehsan* is to balance society and close the gaps created by the disparity of poor distribution of wealth. This is why it says that people should expend, what God has bestowed on them for social welfare. Those in a position to do so must contribute a fixed amount from their disposable income. The word the Quran uses to describe this expenditure is *anfaq.* This can be a portion of your money set aside for helping those in need or it may be an amount of taxation levied by the government to establish and maintain a social welfare system. Practically it needs to be both: a portion reserved and given first to parents, then to family and those in need known to you, while the state system should be there to provide for those who have no other means of support. This is not charity but the implementation of social welfare system to share and distribute wealth to all members of society. Everyone has a right to a decent standard of living. The idea is to raise the standard of living for all people and give them their right. This also gives the receiver dignity and respect, not pity and charity which degrades the human Self. The adage that says, *give a man a fish, feed him for a day; show a man how to fish, feed him for life* is a good illustration of the 'expenditure' people are expected to make for social welfare and look after each other's interests.

Universal Basic income: Social welfare is referred to throughout the Quran is an important duty incumbent on all members of society and for the benefit of every individual in the community. To share in the inherited social wealth is everyone's right. The Quran advocates not charity but dignity. It's not just an important personal obligation but also something that has to be put in place by the government of the day. One way this can operate is to establish a Basic Income (that is not means tested) for every man, woman and child paid to every permanent resident in the country and funded by the taxes paid by businesses and working people. This would mean higher taxes and realignment of current system and tighter laws to ensure corporations paid instead of avoiding tax liabilities. Every individual would be paid regardless of their age or working status. This also removes the stigma of receiving benefits often seen as state 'charitable' handouts. The amount paid would depend on age, and those who did not have the capacity to work (e.g. those with long term illness or disability) would also get additional benefits. This would ensure that everyone had financial security throughout their life. People could express themselves

Sura 22: The Challenge (Al-Hajj)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[22:1] O people, you shall reverence your Sustainer, for the quake that signifies the End is something most dreadful.
[22:2] The day you witness it even a nursing mother will discard her infant and a pregnant female will abort her foetus. You will see people staggering, as if they are intoxicated, even though they are not. This is because God's retribution is so awesome.
[22:3] Among the people there are those who argue about God without knowledge and follow every rebellious devil.
[22:4] It is decreed that anyone who allies himself with evil, will find himself misled and misguided to the agony of a torment of hell.

EXAMPLES OF LIFE

[22:5] O people, if you have any doubt about resurrection, remember that We created you from dust and subsequently from a tiny drop of semen, which turns into a clutching piece then it becomes a lump of flesh that is given life or deemed lifeless. We thus clarify things for you. We settle you in your mothers' wombs, according to Our ordinance, for a predetermined period. We then bring you out as a child, then you reach maturity. While some of you die young, while others live to be old and frail, only to find out that no more knowledge can be attained beyond a certain limit. Also, you look at the land that is dead, then as soon as We shower it with water it vibrates with life and grows all kinds of beautiful plants.
[22:6] All this God creates with truth and He revives the dead and that He is in control of all things.
[22:7] And that the End of all this is coming there is no doubt about it and that God resurrects even those who are in their graves.

ARGUMENT WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE

[22:8] Among the people there are the ones who argue about God, without knowledge and without an enlightening guidance.
[22:9] Arrogantly they strive to divert many people from the path of God. They thus incur humiliation in this life and We commit them on the Day of Resurrection to the agony of a burning torment.
[22:10] This is what your hands have sent ahead for you. God is never unjust towards any people.

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and help other members of society without having to worry about basic needs. See verses and footnotes 2:3; 2:177; 2:215; 2:219; 2:265; 2:267; 2:272; 3:92; 51:15-19; 47:37 & 10:109. See also the Concepts section under Charity & Social Welfare.

REMAIN STEADFAST AT ALL TIMES

[22:11] Among the people there is the one who serves God conditionally. If good things befalls on him, he is content. But if some adversity befalls him, he moves away. Thus, he loses both this life and the life yet to come. Such is the real loss.
[22:12] He accepts authorities as equals to God, those who possess no power to harm him or benefit him; such is the real straying.
[22:13] He accepts as authority those who are more likely to harm him than benefit him. What miserable leaders and what a miserable follower.
[22:14] God welcomes those who believe and lead a righteous life into gardens watered with flowing streams. Everything is in accordance with God's ordinance.

THE BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

[22:15] If anyone thinks that God cannot sustain him in this life and in the life yet to come, let him turn completely to his Creator by following this guidance and sever his dependence on anyone else for such direction. He will then see that this plan eliminates anything that troubles him.
[22:16] We have thus revealed clear guidance in here, then anyone who ignites his own initiative is guided according to God's ordinance.

EVERYTHING WORKS WITHIN GOD'S LAW

[22:17] Those who believe, those who are Jewish, the Sabians, the Nazarene, the Majusa and the Mushrikeen, God is the One who will judge among them on the Day of Reckoning. God witnesses all things.[584]
[22:18] Do you not realise that to God's ordinance concedes all that is in the heavens and the earth and the sun and the moon and the stars and the mountains and the trees and the animals and many people?[585] Many others among the people are committed to doom. Whomever God shames, none can honour him. Everything is in accordance with God's ordinance.

THE HORRORS OF HELL

[22:19] Here are two parties feuding with regard to their Sustainer. As for those who disbelieve, they will be enveloped in fire and hellish liquid will be poured on top of their heads.
[22:20] It will cause their insides to melt, as well as their skins.
[22:21] They will be confined in irons.
[22:22] Whenever they try to exit such misery, they will be forced back in: "Taste the agony of a burning torment."[586]

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[584] **Those of other creeds:** see verse and footnote 16:125.
[585] **All that** is in the heavens and the earth submits to God, even though an individual may reject God's guidance, he still has to submit to the physical laws in order to exist as a human being.
[586] **Heaven and hell:** These are allegorical descriptions. The horrors cannot be imagined or understood, just as the pleasure of heaven cannot be perceived.

THE PLEASURE OF A HARMONIOUS LIFE

[22:23] God will admit those who believe and lead a righteous life into gardens watered with flowing streams. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and pearls and their garments will be made of silk.
[22:24] They have been guided by good words and they have been guided in the path of the Most Praised.
[22:25] Surely, those who disbelieve and deter others from the path of God, from these Sanctioned Submissions that We designated for all mankind and seek to pollute and corrupt them, We will afflict them with painful retribution.[587]

ABRAHAM ESTABLISHED GOD'S DEEN: THE SOCIAL ORDER

[22:26] We appointed Abraham to establish the system of Deen-Islam: "You shall not set up any authority to equal or rival Me and purify My System for those who enter it, those who live by it and those who consent and humble themselves to it.
[22:27] "And proclaim to mankind that all the people shall take up this challenge. Whether they are travelling or living in isolated locations."[588]
[22:28] Even when they seek commercial benefits they shall commemorate God's name and from the provisions bestowed on them during this period, eat and feed the despondent and the poor.
[22:29] They shall complete their obligations, fulfil their promises and follow the original System: Deen-Islam.
[22:30] Those who reverence the sanctions decreed by God deserve a good reward from their Sustainer. All livestock are made lawful for your food, except those specifically restricted for you. You shall avoid the abomination of accepting authorities to rank with God and not bear false witness.[589]
[22:31] You shall maintain your service absolutely to God. Anyone who sets up any authority to equal or rival God is like one who falls from the sky, then gets snatched up by vultures or blown away by the wind into a deep ravine.
[22:32] Indeed, those who reverence the sanctions decreed by God demonstrate that their righteousness is safeguarded.[590]
[22:33] You attract many benefits when you become part of the original System: Deen-Islam.
[22:34] For every community We have decreed sanctions whereby they commemorate the name of God for providing them with provisions from

[587] **Those who seek** to corrupt God's Absolute Laws and Permanent Values given in the Quran will face humiliation. This includes those who make up prohibitions not found here or add punishments (such as stoning) not decreed in this guidance. See verse 6:114.
[588] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*-Root H'J'J). See verse and footnote: 2:76.
[589] **Food:** See verse and footnote 2:168. **Do not bear false witness** 63:1.
[590] **The Deen-Islam** as enshrined in the Quran is the Social Order sanctioned by God and is God's System. See verse 3:85. **System:** (Arabic: *bayta*). See verse and footnote 22:26; 71:28.

the livestock. Your God is One and the only God and you shall all submit to Him. Give good news to those obedient to His laws.
[22:35] They are the ones whose hearts succumb upon mentioning God, they steadfastly persevere during adversity, they observe their commitments and from Our provisions to them they spend for the good of society.[591]

MENTION GOD'S NAME WHEN SLAUGHTERING FOR SACRIFICE

[22:36] The animal sacrifices are among the sanctioned decrees of God for your own good. You shall mention God's name upon them when you prepare for the kill. Once they are slaughtered, you shall eat from the meat and feed the poor and the needy. This is why We subdued them for you, that you may show your appreciation.[592]
[22:37] Neither their meat, nor their blood reaches God. What ascends to Him is your righteousness that you preserve and safeguard. He has subdued them for you that you may show your appreciation by glorifying God for guiding you. Give good news to those who do good.[593]

[22:38] God defends those who believe. God does not care for any betrayer, unappreciative individual.
[22:39] Permission to fight and defend is granted to those who are being persecuted, since injustice has befallen them, and God is certainly able to support them.
[22:40] They were evicted from their homes unjustly for no reason other than saying, "God is our Sustainer." If it were not for God supporting these people against others because of their commitments to uphold the submissions in the name of God, they would have been destroyed. Absolutely, God supports those who keep their duty to Him. God is Powerful and Almighty.
[22:41] They are those who, if We appointed them as rulers on earth, they would establish their commitments and keep them pure and would advocate righteousness and forbid evil. And remember, it is God who is the absolute sovereign.[594]
[22:42] If they reject you, the people of Noah, Ad and Thamoud have also disbelieved before them.
[22:43] Also the people of Abraham and the people of Lot.

[591] **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. Give dignity not charity. See verse and footnote 21:112.
[592] **Decrees of God:** (Arabic: *shariallah*). The Quran alone is *sharia-Allah*: the decree or way of God.
[593] **Sacrifice** of animals, a portion of your livestock is for feeding the poor and others in need.
[594] **Why** do bad things happen to good people? See verse and footnote 8:25.

[22:44] And the dwellers of Midyan. Moses was also rejected. We gave those people enough latitude, then We called them to account. How devastating was My punishment!
[22:45] Many a community We have annihilated because of their wickedness. They ended up in ruins, stilled wells and great empty mansions.
[22:46] Did they not travel the earth, then use their minds to understand and use their ears to hear? Indeed, the real blindness is not the blindness of the eyes, but the blindness of their hearts inside their chests.
[22:47] They challenge you to bring retribution and God never fails to fulfil His promise. A day ordained at your Sustainer is like an aeon of your time.[595]
[22:48] Many a community in the past committed evil and We gave them much latitude for a while, then We punished them. To Me is your ultimate return.
[22:49] Say: "O people, I have been sent to you with a clear warning."
[22:50] Those who believe and lead a life of good works have deserved protection and a generous recompense.
[22:51] As for those who strive to challenge Our guidance, they incur a hell of their own making.

EVIL INDIVIDUALS TRY TO CORRUPT GOD'S GUIDANCE

[22:52] We did not send before you any revelation, a messenger nor an envoy, without some evil individuals interfere in the process. God then nullifies what these devils have done and God establishes His revealed guidance. God is aware of all things, Most Wise.[596]
[22:53] He thus allows their devilish schemes as a trial for those who harbour doubts in their hearts and those whose hearts are hardened. The wicked always remain with the opposition.
[22:54] Those who are endowed with knowledge will recognize the truth from your Sustainer, then believe in it and their hearts will readily accept it. Most assuredly, God guides the believers in the right and balanced path.
[22:55] As for those who disbelieve, they will continue to harbour doubts until their end comes to them suddenly or until the retribution of a terrible day that concludes everything.

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[595] **Aeon:** period, age, eternity. This and other verses that mention time are really metaphors for long periods. Time, as we know it, may not exist outside the galaxies or even elsewhere. In all probability the earth or even the universe was created not *in* time but *with* time.

[596] **There are 'demons'** within us and 'devils' around us, all fighting to influence the ego of the Self. The egotistic personalities are determined to corrupt God's guidance and any good in general to deter people from doing good works. So you have to choose, to accept or reject internal and external influences, this includes fabricated doctrines such as the profane hadith. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 6:112-113; 20:123. **Messenger/envoy:** (Arabic: *rasul/ nabiy*). See verse and footnote 7:157.

[22:56] All sovereignty belongs to God and He will judge between them on that day. As for those who believe and do good works in this life, they have deserved gardens of bliss.
[22:57] While those who disbelieved and rejected Our revelations have incurred a shameful retribution.
[22:58] Those who face challenges for the sake of God, then get killed or die, God will surely shower them with good provisions. God is certainly the best provider.
[22:59] Most assuredly, He will welcome them to an admittance that will please them. God is Clement and aware of all things.
[22:60] It is decreed that if one avenges equitably an injustice that was inflicted upon him, then he is persecuted because of this, God will surely support him. God is Pardoner and Protector.[597]

GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE

[22:61] It is God who merges the night into the day and merges the day into the night and God is Hearer, Seer.
[22:62] It is a fact that God is the Truth, while the setting up of any authority to rival or equal Him constitutes a heinous falsehood, and remember that God is the Most High, the Supreme.
[22:63] Do you not see that God sends down from the sky water that turns the land green? God is sublime, aware of all things.
[22:64] To Him belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth. Absolutely, God is the One who is Most Prosperous, Most Praiseworthy.

EVERYTHING ON EARTH TO SERVE MANKIND

[22:65] Do you not see that God has committed in your service everything on earth? The ships float in the ocean by His ordinance. He prevents the heavenly bodies from crashing into the earth, except in accordance with the laws that He designed. God is Most Kind towards all the people, Most Merciful.
[22:66] He is the One who granted you life, then He puts you to death, then He brings you back to life. Surely, the human being is unappreciative.
[22:67] For each community, We have decreed a set of sanctions that they must uphold. Therefore, they should not dispute with this message. You shall continue to invite everyone to your Sustainer. Most assuredly, those who follow this are on the right path.
[22:68] If they argue with you, then say, "God is fully aware of everything you do."
[22:69] God will judge among you on the Day of Reckoning regarding all your disputes.

[597] **Pardoner and Protector:** (Arabic: *afuwwun-ghafur*). See verses 2:52, 2:58; 4:43; 58:2.

[22:70] Do you not realise that God knows everything in the heavens and everything on earth? All this is confirmed in a record. This is easy for God to do.
[22:71] Yet, they set up beside God authorities to rival or equal Him, in whom He placed no power and they know nothing about them. The corrupt have no helper.
[22:72] When Our guidance is advocated to them clearly, you recognize wickedness on the faces of those who disbelieve. They almost attack those who advocate Our guidance to them. Say: "Shall I inform you of something much worse? Hell is promised by God for those who reject this. What a miserable end."[598]

[22:73] O people, here is a parable that you should consider carefully: the authorities you set up can never create a fly, even if they banded together to do so. Furthermore, if the fly steals anything from them, they cannot recover it, weak is the pursuer and the pursued.
[22:74] They do not value God as He should be valued. God is the most Powerful and the Almighty.
[22:75] God chooses from among the malaika messengers, as well as from among mankind. God is Hearer and sees all things.
[22:76] He knows their past and their future. To God belongs the ultimate control of all things.
[22:77] O you who believe, you shall humbly consent and serve your Sustainer and work righteousness, that you may succeed.
[22:78] You shall strive for the cause of God as you should strive for His cause. He has chosen you and has placed no hardship on you in fulfilling your duty in this Deen-Islam, the established order and the principles of your father Abraham. We enrich you with higher values so that you can be recognised as muslims. Thus, the messenger shall serve as a witness among you and you shall serve as witnesses among your people. Therefore, you shall observe your commitments and keep them pure and remember firmly your accountability to God. He is your benefactor, the best patron and the only true helper that you have.[599]

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[598] **Following** this guidance stops people from fulfilling their selfish desires and corrupt ideals, so they are prone to be angry and upset. Most people are content on satisfying their immediate wishes (money, power etc.) and woe betide anyone who interferes with their plans.

[599] **Muslim:** One who harmonises. (Root: S'L'M. Derivatives*: islam, muslim, salamun*). Descriptive term for anyone who harmonise life by applying the Absolute Laws and Permanent Values given by God in the Quran. In English 'muslim' (with small m) is an attribute that means a submitter, one who achieves peace by submission to God's laws, i.e. one who harmonises with Deen-Islam. This word is often misrepresented when written as 'Muslim' (with a capital M) - and used as a title or a label. No one is born a muslim, an individual *becomes* a muslim by acquiring the necessary qualities through virtuous acts. See verses 3:199; 28:53. **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*). Keeping your commitments pure is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. See verse 2:43 and footnote.

Sura 23: The Believers (Al-Mu'minun)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[23:1] Successful indeed are the believers,
[23:2] who are humble and steadfast in fulfilling their commitments.
[23:3] And they avoid vain talk.
[23:4] And they keep their commitments pure.
[23:5] And they maintain their integrity.
[23:6] Only with their wives, those who are rightfully theirs, do they have intimate relations without being blamed.
[23:7] Those who transgress these limits are the corrupt.
[23:8] When it comes to deposits entrusted to them, as well as any agreements they make, they are trustworthy.
[23:9] And they fulfil their commitments consistently at all times.
[23:10] Such are the inheritors.
[23:11] They will inherit a harmonious future that endures forever.[600]

HUMAN EVOLUTION & DEVELOPMENT

[23:12] We created the human being from a certain enriched clay.[601]
[23:13] Subsequently, We reproduced him from a tiny drop that is placed into a womb, a protected repository.
[23:14] Then We developed the drop into a clinging piece; an embryo, then developed the embryo into a small, corpulent foetus, then developed the foetus with bones, then covered the bones with flesh. We thus bring forth a new distinguished creation. Most sanctified is God, the best creator.
[23:15] Then after a period determined by Our ordinance, you die.[602]
[23:16] Then, on the Day of Resurrection, you will be raised and restored.

[23:17] We created above you seven universes in layers and We are never unaware of a single creation in them.
[23:18] We send down from the sky water in exact measure, then We store it in the ground. Certainly, We can let it escape and waste.
[23:19] With it We produce for you orchards of date palms, vineyards of grapes, all kinds of fruits and various foods.

Muslim and Mu'min: see verse 49:14. **Patron/benefactor.** (Arabic: *maula*). See verses and footnotes 2:286; 6:62.

[600] **Those who** follow this guidance will make for themselves a heaven on earth and in the coming life they will live in eternal harmony.

[601] **Life** first started from primordial clay crystals, the self-replicating mineral. The rest, as they say is natural history. See verses and footnotes 3:59; 36:82.

[602] **The time of death is** not predetermined, it depends on individual behaviour. Many things enhance life or cut it short: exercise, food, drink and stress all have great impact on an individual's lifespan.

[23:20] Also, a tree native to Sinai produces oil, as well as a relish for the eaters.
[23:21] And the livestock should provide you with a lesson. We create the milk you drink from them, also you derive other benefits from them and some livestock you use for food.
[23:22] On others you ride as on the ships you travel.

NOAH SAVES HIS FAMILY AND LIVESTOCK

[23:23] We sent Noah to his people, saying, "O my people, serve God. There is no other authority to rank with Him. Would you not be righteous?"
[23:24] The leaders who disbelieved among his people said, "He is no more than a human like you, who wants to gain prominence among you. Had God willed, He could have sent down a malaika. We never heard of anything like this from our fathers.
[23:25] "He is simply a man possessed. Just ignore him for awhile."
[23:26] Noah said, "My Sustainer, grant me victory, for they have disbelieved me."
[23:27] We then inspired him: "Make a watercraft under our watchful eye and in accordance with Our inspiration. When Our command comes and the downpour starts put on it a pair of each of your livestock and your family, except those condemned to be doomed. Do not speak to Me on behalf of those who are corrupt, they will be drowned.
[23:28] "Once you are settled together with those who are with you on the craft, you shall say, `Praise God for saving us from the wicked people.'
[23:29] "And say, `My Sustainer, let me disembark onto a blessed location; You are the best deliverer.' "
[23:30] These should provide sufficient signs for you. We will certainly put you to the test.

ANOTHER COMMUNITY THAT REJECTED

[23:31] Subsequently, We established another generation after them.
[23:32] We sent to them a messenger from among them, saying, "You shall serve God. You have no other authority to rank with Him. Would you not be righteous?"
[23:33] The leaders among his people who disbelieved and rejected the idea of a hereafter, the life yet to come, although We provided for them generously in this life, said, "He is no more than a human being like you. He eats from what you eat and drinks as you drink.
[23:34] "If you obey a human being like you, then you really are losers.
[23:35] "Does he promise you that after you die and turn into dust and bones, you will come out alive again?
[23:36] "Impossible, impossible indeed is what is promised to you.

[23:37] "We only live this life, we live and die and we will never be resurrected.
[23:38] "He is just a man who fabricated lies and attributed them to God. We will never believe him."
[23:39] He said, "My Sustainer, grant me victory, for they have disbelieved me."
[23:40] He said, "Soon they will be regretful."
[23:41] The retribution struck them equitably and thus, We turned them into ruins. The wicked people perished.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF BAD DECISIONS

[23:42] Subsequently, We established other generations after them.
[23:43] No community can advance or delay the consequences of its deeds.
[23:44] Then We sent Our messengers in succession. Every time a messenger went to his community, they disbelieved him. Consequently, they were annihilated according to Our ordinance, one after the other and We made them history.[603] The people who rejected Our guidance have perished.
[23:45] Then We sent Moses and his brother Aaron with Our guidance and a profound sign.
[23:46] To Firawn and his elders, but they turned arrogant. They were oppressive people.
[23:47] They said, "Shall we believe these two men whose people are our slaves?"
[23:48] They rejected the two and consequently, they were annihilated.
[23:49] We gave Moses the revelation that they may be guided.
[23:50] We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign and We gave them shelter on a high place with food and drink.

ONE GOD: ONE SYSTEM - SUSTAINED BY GOD

[23:51] O messengers, eat of Our good provisions and do good works. I am fully aware of everything you do.
[23:52] Such is your community, a single community and I am the One who sustains you all and you shall reverence Me alone.
[23:53] But mankind splintered themselves into disputing factions, each party happy with what they have become.
[23:54] Therefore, just leave them in their confusion, for awhile.
[23:55] Do they think that since We provided them with money and children,

[603] **People** who rejected God's guidance became stories of bygone ages to be told as reminders of the consequences of the corrupt. **History:** (Arabic: *hadith*). See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.

[23:56] We have rewarded them? Indeed, they have no idea.[604]
[23:57] Surely, those who are reverently conscious of their Sustainer,
[23:58] And who believe in the revealed guidance of their Sustainer,
[23:59] And who never set up any authority to rival or equal the One who Sustains them,
[23:60] As they give to alleviate the situation of others, their hearts are fully reverent. For they recognize that they will be called to account before their Sustainer,
[23:61] They are eager to do good works and they compete in doing them.

THE CORRUPT WILL FACE SEVERE CONSEQUENCES

[23:62] We never burden any person beyond his means and We keep a record that reveals the truth. No one will suffer injustice.
[23:63] Because their minds are oblivious to this message they commit works that do not conform with Our guidance; their works are corruption and evil.
[23:64] Then We punish those who revel in corruption with Our retribution and they complain.
[23:65] Do not protest now, you will not be given any more opportunities from Us.
[23:66] My signs have been presented to you, but why do you turn your back on them.
[23:67] You are too arrogant to accept them and you defiantly disregard them.
[23:68] Why do you not reflect upon this guidance? Do you not realise that you have received knowledge never attained by your ancestors?
[23:69] Have you failed to recognize this message? Is this why you are disregarding it?
[23:70] Have you decided that it is preposterous? Indeed, this is the truth for you, but most people hate the truth. [605]
[23:71] Indeed, if the truth conformed to their wishes, there would be chaos in the heavens and the earth and everything in them would be corrupted. We have given them clear signs as reminders but they disregard these reminders.
[23:72] The messengers never asked for any reward. Your Sustainer's rewards are far better. He is the best provider.[606]

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[604] **God gives** great latitude to those who choose to do wrong, they are in reality given enough rope to hang themselves. They think they are doing great when in fact when they are digging a hellhole for themselves.
[605] **The disbelievers** fail to see the value of this guidance. See footnote to verse 16:106.
[606] **God's messengers** never asked for a wage or any recompense from their people. This is in stark contrast to many charities, priests and self-appointed 'guardians of the faith' who thrive on the money extracted and fleeced from their donator's and devoted followers. See verses 9:31-35.

[23:73] Most assuredly this message is inviting you to a straight and balanced path.
[23:74] Those who disbelieve in the life yet to come will surely deviate from the right path.
[23:75] Even when We shower them with mercy and relieve their troubles, they plunge deeper into transgression and continue to blunder.
[23:76] Even when We afflict them with punishment, they never turn to their Sustainer for guidance.
[23:77] Subsequently, when We requite them with the severe retribution they deserve, they are shocked.
[23:78] He is the One who granted you your hearing, your eyesight and your insight. But rarely are you appreciative.
[23:79] He is the One who established you on earth and before Him you will be held accountable.
[23:80] He is the One who controls life and death and He is the One who alternates the night and day. Do you not understand this?
[23:81] They said what their ancestors had said.
[23:82] They said, "After we die and become dust and bones, do we get resurrected?
[23:83] "Such promises were given to us and to our forefathers in the past. These are no more than tales from times gone by."
[23:84] Say: "To whom belongs the earth and everyone on it, if you know?"[607]
[23:85] They will say, "To God." Say: "Why then do you not take heed?"
[23:86] Say: "Who is the Sustainer of the seven universes and the Sustainer of the great dominion?"
[23:87] They will say, "God." Say: "Why then do you not turn righteous?"
[23:88] Say: "In whose hand is power over all things and He is the only one who can provide help, but needs no help, if you know?"
[23:89] They will say, "God." Say: "How then are you ensnared away from this guidance?"
[23:90] We have given them the truth, while they are liars.

MORE THAN ONE GOD MEANS CHAOS

[23:91] God has never begotten a son. Nor was there ever any other authority to equal Him. Otherwise, each one would have declared

[607] **Belief in God** means to accept accountability and God's power over all things. Many, while professing to believe, do not follow this guidance and nullify their belief by setting up authorities to rival or equal God, authorities such as as the messengers by mistakenly attributing to them things they never did, said or decreed and then erroneously following these. Many people profess to believe in the Quran while in reality apply other teachings and doctrines. Could it be that they have rejected the Quran while believing they have not? **Those who** profess to believe in the One God can actually be mushrikeen: traitors. See verse: 12:106.

independence with his creations and they would have competed with each other for dominance. God be glorified; far above their claims.[608]
[23:92] The knower of all secrets and declarations; be He exalted, far above having a partner.
[23:93] Say: "My Sustainer whether or not You show me the retribution they have incurred,
[23:94] my Sustainer, let me not be one of these people to go beyond the limits."
[23:95] To show you the punishment We have reserved for them is something We can easily do.
[23:96] Therefore, prevent their evil works with integrity and justice; We are fully aware of their claims.[609]

SEEK PROTECTION FROM EVIL

[23:97] Say: "My Sustainer, I seek refuge in You from the evil of the scandalmongers.
[23:98] "And I seek refuge in You, my Sustainer, lest they come near me."
[23:99] When death comes to one of them, he says, "My Sustainer, send me back.
[23:100] "I will then do good work in everything I left." This is not true. This is a false claim that he makes. A barrier will separate his Self from this world until the time of his resurrection.
[23:101] When the signal is given, no kinships among them will exist on that day, nor will they care about one another.
[23:102] As for those whose Self has maturity, they will be the ones to progress into a better future in a state of harmony and peace.
[23:103] Those whose Selfs are weak, they are ones who will struggle; locked in a lasting torment, a state of hell.
[23:104] An inferno will overwhelm their faces and they endure misery therein.
[23:105] Was not My guidance given to you and you kept on rejecting it?
[23:106] They will say, "Our Sustainer, our wickedness overwhelmed us and we were people who had gone adrift.
[23:107] "Our Sustainer, take us out of this; if we return to being wrong doers, then we really are wicked."
[23:108] God will say, "Abide therein, humiliated and do not implore to Me."

[608] **Trinity:** see verse and footnote 4:171.
[609] **Tolerance** and understanding is advocated at all times by God. A good example is the best weapon against evil and corrupt people. By applying this guidance individuals can excel in being good examples. See verse 16:125.

[23:109] A group of My servants used to say, "Our Sustainer, we have believed, so protect us and shower us with mercy. Of all the merciful ones, You are the Most Merciful."
[23:110] But you derided and ridiculed them, to the extent that you forgot Me. You used to express amusement at them.
[23:111] I have rewarded them today, in return for their steadfastness, by making them the victorious.
[23:112] He said, "How long have you lasted on earth? How many years?"
[23:113] They said, "We lasted a day or part of a day. Ask those who understand."
[23:114] He said, "In fact, you stayed but a brief period, if you only knew.[610]
[23:115] "Did you think that We created you as a futile gesture? That you were not to be held accountable to Us?"
[23:116] Most exalted is God, the Supreme. There is no other to rank with Him, the Most Honourable Sustainer, possessor of all authority.
[23:117] Anyone who sets up any authority to rival or equal God and without any kind of proof, his reckoning rests with his Sustainer. Those who disbelieve and reject this guidance will never succeed.
[23:118] Say: "My Sustainer, give us your protection and mercy. Of all the merciful ones, You are the Most Merciful."

[610] **The life** of an individual hardly registers on the scale of time. Even a million years is barely a tick on the clock of the universe. So even if we feel we have lived a very long time, it is in fact only a very brief period. Perhaps time as we understand it does not exist elsewhere. In all probability the earth or even the universe was created not *in* time but *with* time. See verse and footnote 22:47.

Sura 24: The Light (Al-Nur)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[24:1] This is a sura that We have sent down and herein We have given some of Our decrees. We have revealed in it clear guidance that you may take heed.

PUNISHMENT FOR ADULTERY

[24:2] The adulteress and the adulterer you shall whip each of them a hundred lashes. Do not be swayed by pity from dispensing this punishment in accordance with God's deen, if you truly believe in God and your accountability to Him. And let a group of believers witness their penalty.
[24:3] The adulterer may only marry an adulteress or an unbeliever, and the adulteress may only marry an adulterer or an unbeliever. This kind of match is prohibited for the believers of this guidance.

ACCUSATIONS OF ADULTERY

[24:4] Those who accuse honourable women of adultery, then fail to produce four witnesses, you shall whip them eighty lashes and do not accept any testimony from them, they are wicked.[611]
[24:5] If they repent afterwards and reform, then God is Protector, most Merciful.[612]
[24:6] As for those who accuse their own wives, without any other witnesses, then the husband's testimony may be accepted if he swears by God four times that he is telling the truth.
[24:7] The fifth oath shall be to incur God's condemnation upon him, if he was lying.
[24:8] She shall be considered innocent if she swears by God four times that he is a liar.[613]

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[611] **Adultery/fornication:** Illicit sexual relations. (Arabic: *zinna.* Root Z'N'Y. Dervivatives: *yazni, yaznuun, zaniyah, zani).* **Adultery:** consensual sexual intercourse between a married man or married woman with a partner other than their legal spouse. **Fornication**: consensual sexual intercourse between two people who are not married. However, the Quran makes no distinction between adultery and fornication, both are termed as Illicit sex. Those who accuse honourable women (married or unmarried) of illicit sex are required to provide four independent witnesses, they need not all have seen the actual act, at the same time, but must be able to provide corroborative evidence of an illicit relationship on different occasions or one single occasion. **Perjury,** the offence of wilfully swearing a false oath is a grave offence and incurs severe penalty of eighty lashes for a false accusation of adultery against a woman. **Suspicion:** without cause is a gross offence. See verse 49:12. **Illicit sex/ immorality:** See verses 4:15-16; 17:32; 25:68; 60:12. See also verses 2:130; 4:19. **Conflict in a marriage:** where there is dissention in a marriage, particularly a protracted one, the process explained in verses 4:34-35 is one of talking it through, temporary separation and possible divorce.
[612] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.
[613] **Testimony:** The oath of a wife supersedes that of her husband. From this It is clear that the testimony of a woman is at least equal to that of a man. See verse and footnote 2:282.

[24:9] The fifth oath shall be to incur God's wrath upon her if he was telling the truth.
[24:10] This is God's grace and mercy towards you. God is Redeemer, Most Wise.

TREAT RUMOURS WITH EXTREME CAUTION

[24:11] A group among you made slanderous accusations. Do not think this experience was bad for you. Instead, you can learn from it. Meanwhile, each one of the gossipmongers has earned his share of the guilt. As for the one who initiated the whole incident, he has incurred a terrible punishment for his lie.[614]
[24:12] When you heard it, the believing men and the believing women should have had better thoughts about themselves and should have said, "This is obviously a falsehood."
[24:13] Only if they produced four witnesses should you have believed them. If they failed to produce their witnesses then they are according to God, liars.
[24:14] If it were not for God's grace towards you and His mercy in this world and in the life yet to come, you would have suffered a great retribution because of this incident.
[24:15] One person invented the allegation with his own tongue and the rest of you repeated it without any proof. You thought it was a simple matter, but according to God it was a gross corruptive offence.
[24:16] When you heard it you should have said, "We will not repeat this. Glory be to You. This is a disgusting falsehood."
[24:17] God admonishes you that you shall never do it again, if you are believers of this guidance.
[24:18] God thus explains the revealed guidance for you. God is aware of all things, most Wise.
[24:19] Those who love to see immorality spread among the believers have incurred a painful punishment in this life and in the Hereafter. God knows, while you do not know.
[24:20] God showers you with His grace and mercy. God is Most Kind towards the believers, Most Merciful.

[614] **Gossiping** can be dangerous and ruins lives. This refers to a historical incident where during a journey, the Messenger's wife, Aisha was left behind in the desert and later found by a young man who helped her catch up with the main caravan. This triggered the gossipmongers to fabricate a lie against Aisha concerning what may have happened between her and her helper. It's a gross offence to accuse a woman of infidelity when there is no proof of such wrongdoing. See verses and footnote 24:4-10. **Suspicion:** Suspicion without cause is a gross offence. See verses 24:10; 24:23; 49:12.

THE EGO ENCOURAGES REGRESSIVE ACTIONS

[24:21] O you who believe, do not follow the evil influences of your egotistic Self. Anyone who follows this path of wickedness should know that he succumbs to malice. If it were not for God's grace towards you and His mercy, none of you would have been purified. But God purifies many according to His ordinance. God hears all and knows all things.[615]

[24:22] Those among you who are privileged with resources and wealth shall spend for the good of their relatives, the poor and those who have taken the challenge for the sake of God. They shall treat them with forgiving tolerance. Do you not love to attain God's protection? God is Protector, Most Merciful.[616]

FALSE ACCUSATION: A GROSS WRONG

[24:23] Surely, those who falsely accuse righteous married believing women have incurred condemnation in this life and in the life yet to come; they have incurred a horrendous punishment.

[24:24] The day will come when their own tongues, hands and feet will bear witness to everything they had done.

[24:25] On that day, God will punish them fully for their works and they will then find out that God speaks the truth.

[24:26] The bad women for the bad men, and the bad men for the bad women, and the good women for the good men, and the good men for the good women. The latter are innocent of any detrimental accusations. They have attained protection from lasting harm and a generous reward.

GOOD CONDUCT WHEN VISITING HOMES

[24:27] O you who believe, do not enter homes other than your own without permission from their occupants and without a greeting of peace for them. This is better for you, that you may take heed.

[24:28] If you find no one inside, do not enter until you obtain permission. If you are told, "Go back," you must go back. This is purer for you. God is fully aware of everything you do.

[24:29] You commit no wrong by entering uninhabited homes where there is something that belongs to you. God knows everything you reveal and everything you conceal.

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[615] **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*). Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. See verse 2:43 and footnote.

[616] **Tolerance** and understanding is advocated at all times by God. A good example is the best weapon against evil and corrupt people. By applying this guidance individuals can excel in being good examples. See verse 16:125. **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verses and footnotes 2:215; 21:112.

BEHAVIOUR AND DRESS CODE FOR BELIEVERS

[24:30] Tell the believing men that they shall subdue their eyes and not stare at women and to maintain their integrity. This is purer for them. God is fully aware of everything they do.

[24:31] And instruct the believing women to subdue their eyes and maintain their chastity. They shall not reveal any parts of their bodies, except that which is necessary. They shall cover their bosoms and shall not relax this mode in the presence of other than their husbands, their fathers, the fathers of their husbands, their sons, the sons of their husbands, their brothers, the sons of their brothers, the sons of their sisters, other women, the male servants and employees whose sexual drive has been nullified or the children who have not reached puberty. They shall not walk in a manner so wanton and attract attention to themselves. All of you shall turn to God and, O you who believe, that you may succeed.[617]

ENCOURAGE MARRIAGE

[24:32] You shall arrange for those of you who are single to get married. They may marry the righteous among your male and female servants, if they are poor. God will enrich them from His grace. God is generous, Knower of all things.[618]

[24:33] Those who cannot afford to get married shall maintain morality until God provides for them from His grace. Those among your servants who need support in order to marry, you shall grant them some help, once you recognise some good in them. And give them from God's money that He has bestowed upon you. You shall not force any females to become prostitutes, seeking the materials of this world, when they wish to be chaste. If anyone forces them, then God, seeing that they are forced, is Protector, Most Merciful.

[24:34] We have revealed to you clarifying guidance and examples from the past generations and an enlightenment for the righteous.

GOD: THE LIGHT OF THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

[24:35] God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The allegory of His light is that of a concave mirror behind a lamp that is placed inside a glass

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[617] **Modest** dress is a virtue of believing men and women. The requirements for a woman's dress is that it should not be revealing or tight fitting and covers herself to avoid attracting sexual attention to her breasts or other parts of her body. Tyrannical traditions have given a false impression that a woman must be covered from head to toe, be veiled or wear a hijab. These instructions are not Quranic and should not be considered as such. See verses and footnotes 33:55- 59. **Disbelievers** cover themselves. See verses 71:5-7.

[618] **Arrange marriages:** To encourage marriage among single, widowed and other marriageable prospects is a responsibility for all those who are in a position to do so and also financially support the less well-off to marry. See also verse 4:2.

container. The glass container is like a bright, pearl-like star. The fuel thereof is supplied from a consecrated oil-producing tree, that is neither eastern, nor western. Its oil is almost self-radiating; needs no fire to ignite it. Light upon light. God guides to His light whoever wills to be guided. God thus sets forth a parable for mankind. God is fully aware of all things.
[24:36] God's guidance is found in houses exalted by God, for His name is commemorated therein. Glorifying Him therein, day and night
[24:37] People who are not distracted by business or trade from establishing God's decrees; they observe their commitments and keep them pure and they are conscious of the day when their minds and the eyes will perceive the crushing reality that overwhelms.
[24:38] God will certainly reward them for their good works and will shower them with His grace. God provides according to His ordinance for whomever He wills without limits.

AN ALLEGORY FOR EVIL WORKS

[24:39] As for those who disbelieve, their works are like a mirage in the desert. A thirsty person thinks that he sees water. But when he reaches it, he finds that it is nothing, but instead he finds God there, to punish him fully for his corrupt works. Indeed God is the most efficient Reckoner.
[24:40] Another allegory is that of being in total darkness in the depth of a violent ocean overwhelmed by waves upon waves, in addition to a thick fog; darkness upon darkness. If he stretches his own hand, he can barely see it. Whomever God's ordinance deprives of enlightenment will have no discerning insight.

BIRDS INSTINCTIVELY FULFIL THEIR COMMITMENTS

[24:41] Do you not realise that everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies God, even the birds in their flight? Each instinctively fulfils its commitments and its purpose. God is fully aware of everything they do.[619]
[24:42] To God belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and to God is the final accountability.

DISCOVERIES FOR THOSE WITH INSIGHT

[24:43] Do you not realise that God drives the clouds then gathers them together, then piles them on each other, then you see the rain coming out of

[619] **Commitments:** (Arabic: *solaa*) of birds and every living and non-living creation behave according to the natural and physical laws of nature. It is the human being who is independent and has 'free will' and can choose to follow these submissions and establish his commitments or reject this guidance. When you properly use the gifts God has bestowed upon you, you glorify Him. **Glorify God** by fulfilling a purpose/ realising your potential: (Arabic: *tasbih*). When life or matter follow God's laws, instinctively or willingly, they serve God, and in effect are fulfilling a purpose. In doing so they glorify God. See verses and footnotes 2:3; 2:30; 21:19-20; 57:1; 59:24.

them? He sends down from the sky loads of hailstorms to deluge a place according to His ordinance, while diverting it from other places according to His ordinance. The flash of lightning almost blinds the eyes.
[24:44] God controls the night and the day. This should be enlightenment for those who possess insight.
[24:45] And God created every living creature from water. Some of them slither on their bellies, some walk on two legs and some walk on four. God creates many things according to His ordinance. God has power over all things.
[24:46] We have sent down to you clarifying revelations, then God guides, according to His ordinance, whoever wills to be guided in a straight and balanced path.

PEOPLE REVERT AFTER RECEIVING GUIDANCE

[24:47] The believers say, "We believe in God and in the messenger and we obey," but then some of them slide back afterwards. These are not believers.
[24:48] When invited to be judged by God, according to His law in this guidance, some of them become unsettled.
[24:49] However, if the judgment is in their favour, they readily accept it.
[24:50] Is there a disease in their hearts? Are they doubtful? Are they afraid that God and His messenger may treat them unfairly? In fact, it is they who are unjust.[620]

BELIEVERS OBEY GOD'S MESSAGE WITHOUT HESITATION

[24:51] The only utterance of the believers whenever invited to be judged in their affairs by God, according to the law brought by His messenger, is to say, "We hear and we obey." These are the ones who prosper.
[24:52] Those who obey God and His messenger, fulfil their duty to God and reverence Him, these are the successful ones.
[24:53] They swear by God, solemnly, that if commanded to mobilize, they would mobilize. Say: "Do not make such an oath. Obedience is an obligation. God is fully aware of everything you do."
[24:54] Say: "Obey God and obey His messenger." If they refuse, then he is responsible for his obligations and you are responsible for your obligations. If you obey him, you will be guided. The sole duty of the messenger is to deliver the complete clear message.[621]

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[620] **Since the messenger** is now no longer here to teach or judge, each community needs to use the Quranic laws, values and principles to adjudicate. Laws made and enforced by governments and administrators of the day need to be within the Quranic parameters to reflect this.
[621] **Obey God** and Obey the messenger now means to obey the message individually and collectively, this also applies when implemented by the government or leaders of the day, providing that they remain within the Quranic Permanent Values and Absolute Laws. Accepting

GOD'S PROMISE: PEACE AND SECURITY

[24:55] God promises those among you who believe and lead a righteous life that He will make them flourish on earth, as He did for those before them and will establish for them this Deen-Islam, the established Order that He has chosen for them and will replace turmoil with peace, and fear with security. All this because they serve Me alone and they never set up any authority to equal Me. Those who disbelieve after this are the truly wicked.

[24:56] You shall observe your commitments and keep them pure and act upon this message, that you may attain mercy.

[24:57] Do not think that those who disbelieve will escape the punishment of their wrongdoing. Their final abode is turmoil in a hell of their own making; what a miserable end.

PRIVATE TIME FOR ADULTS

[24:58] O you who believe, permission must be requested by your servants and your children before entering your rooms. This is to be done on at least three instances: before your early morning commitments commence, when you rest at noon, and when you retire and relax at night after finishing your day's commitments. These are three private times for you. At other times, it is not wrong for you or them to mingle with one another. God thus clarifies the guidance for you. God is aware of all things, Most Wise.

[24:59] Once children reach puberty they must always ask permission before entering your rooms, like those who became adults before them have asked for your permission. God thus clarifies His guidance for you. God is aware of all things, Most Wise.

DRESS MODESTLY

[24:60] The elderly women who do not expect to get married commit nothing wrong by relaxing their dress, provided they do not reveal too much of their bodies. To maintain modesty is better for them too. God is Hearer and Knower of all things.

SHARE FOOD WITH FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

[24:61] There is no indignity on the blind, the disabled and you for eating at your own homes or the homes of your fathers or the homes of your mothers, or the homes of your brothers or the homes of your sisters, or the homes of your father's brothers or the homes of your father's sisters, or the homes of your mother's brothers or the homes of your mother's sisters, or

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laws that contradict God's laws is shirk, treachery, the accepting of an authority (other lawmakers) as equal to God. See verses and footnotes 9:1-10 and see footnote 80:42. See also verse 46:35.

the homes to which you possess the keys or the homes of your friends. You commit nothing wrong by eating together in groups or as individuals. When you enter any home, you shall greet each other with a greeting from God that conveys sincere peace. God thus explains the guidance for you, that you may understand.[622]

RULES FOR COMMUNITY MEETINGS

[24:62] The true believers are those who believe in God and His messenger and when they are with him in a community meeting, they do not leave without permission. Those who ask permission are the ones who do believe in God and His messenger. If they seek to be excused, in order to tend to some of their affairs, you may grant permission to whomever you wish and ask God to protect them. God is Protector, Most Merciful.[623]

[24:63] Do not treat the messenger's requests as you treat each others' requests. God is fully aware of those among you who sneak away using feeble excuses. Let them beware, those who disobey his orders, a disaster may strike them or a severe retribution.[624]

[24:64] Absolutely, to God belongs everything in the heavens and the earth. He fully knows every condition you may be in. The day you are returned to Him, He will inform you of everything you have done. God is fully aware of all things.

[622] **Food and eating:** See verse footnote 2:168. **Greeting from God** see verse and footnote 6:54.

[623] **Consensus:** while Absolute Laws and Permanent Values are fixed, deciding matters by consensus, such as making by-laws, choosing a leader to govern, within the parameters of the Quranic guidance is not only permissible but necessary. See also verses and footnotes 33:159; 42:38; 49:2; 58:11; 62:9-11.

[624] **Any requests or decisions** made by community leaders deserve the same respect that the messengers as leaders should have been given - provided that they are aligned with Quranic values. The same rules apply now as before. Even those who were with the Messenger were instructed to follow - not to disobey - only his righteous orders. See verses 60:12 and 42:38.

Sura 25: The Criterion (Al-Furqan)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[25:1] Most high is the One who revealed this criterion: the statute, to His servant, so that he can serve as a warner to the whole world.[625]
[25:2] The One to whom belongs all sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He never had a son, nor does He have any partners in His domain. He created everything in exact measure and He precisely designed everything.
[25:3] Yet, they set up authorities to rival or equal him who do not create anything yet they themselves are created and who possess no power to even harm or benefit themselves, nor do they possess any power to control life or death or resurrection.
[25:4] Those who disbelieved said, "This is a fabrication that he produced, with the help of some other people." They have uttered a blasphemy and a falsehood.
[25:5] They also said, "They are tales from the past that he wrote down; they were dictated to him day and night."[626]
[25:6] Say: "This was revealed by the One who knows all the secrets of the heavens and the earth. He is the Protector and the Most Merciful."

UNREASONABLE DEMANDS BY DISBELIEVERS

[25:7] And they said, "How come this messenger eats food and walks in the markets? If only a angel could come down with him, to serve with him as a preacher!"[627]
[25:8] Or, "If only a treasure could be given to him!" Or, "If only he could possess an orchard from which he eats fruit!" The corrupt also said, "You are following a bewitched man."
[25:9] Note how they called you all kinds of names and how this led them astray, never to find their way back.
[25:10] Most generous is the One who can, if He wills, give you much better than their demands; gardens watered with flowing streams and many mansions.
[25:11] In fact, they have disbelieved in the their own accountability and We have prepared for those who deny their responsibility a torment in a hell of their own making.

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[625] **The Quran** is the criteria and the statute of God's decrees and is the basis for Absolute Laws and Permanent Values: unchanging principles for changing times. Not applying them does not absolve anyone of their obligations. Whether you believe, or indeed accept this or not, violating or failing to observe God's law means serious consequences - every action has a result, the law of requital is all part of God's ordinance. See verse and footnote 24:53.

[626] **The messenger** was a literate man, otherwise how could anyone accuse him of writing anything, let alone this revelation from God? See verse and footnote 2:78.

[627] **Angel:** Those who have no proper knowledge believe the malaika to be female angels. See verses and footnotes 2:30; 6:8.

[25:12] Before they see it from afar, they will feel its intensity.
[25:13] And when the punishment befalls them, they will declare their remorse.
[25:14] You will declare not just a single regret on that day, you will suffer through a great number of regrets.
[25:15] Say: "Is this better or the eternal harmony that is promised for the righteous? It is their well-deserved reward and a well-deserved future."
[25:16] They get anything they wish for therein, forever. This is your Sustainer's irrevocable promise.
[25:17] On the day when He summons them together with the authorities they have set up to rival God, He will say, "Have you misled these servants of Mine or did they go astray on their own?"
[25:18] They will say, "Be You glorified, it was not right for us to set up any rivals as sustainers beside You. You allowed them to enjoy, together with their parents yet they disregarded the message and thus became wicked people."[628]
[25:19] They disbelieved in the guidance God gave them and consequently, their false authorities can neither protect them from the retribution they have incurred, nor can they help them in any way. Anyone among you who commits evil, We will commit him to severe punishment.

GOD APPOINTED HUMANS AS MESSENGERS

[25:20] We did not send any messengers before you who did not eat food and walk in the markets. We thus test you by each other: will you not steadfastly persevere? The One who sustains you sees all things.
[25:21] Those who do not expect accountability to Us say, "If only an angel could come down to us or we could see our Sustainer, we would then believe." Indeed, they have committed gross arrogance and have shown nothing but contempt.
[25:22] The day they see the malaika, it will not be good news for the guilty. They will say, "Now, we are irreversibly confined."
[25:23] We will look at all the works they have done and consistent with Our ordinance they are rendered annulled.
[25:24] The dwellers in harmony are far better on that day and they will hear better news.
[25:25] The heavens will break apart, into masses of clouds and the malaika will descend in multitudes.
[25:26] All sovereignty on that day belongs to the Most Gracious. For the disbelievers, it will be a difficult day.

[628] **Following** your parents blindly is one of the greatest human tragedies. Not long after your birth, they decide your name, nationality, religion and sect. And you spend the rest of your life defending something you did not even choose. See verse 37:74.

[25:27] The day will come when the transgressor will bite his hands in anguish and say, "Alas, I wish I had followed the path of this guidance.
[25:28] "Alas, misery is on me, I wish I did not take that person as a friend.
[25:29] "He has led me away from the guidance after it came to me." Indeed, the egotistic Self makes victims when it betrays,

THE MESSENGER CONFIRMS THAT
HIS PEOPLE HAVE ABANDONED THE QURAN

[25:30] and the messenger will say, "My Sustainer, my people have deserted this Quran."[629]
[25:31] We also set up against every messenger enemies from among the guilty. Your Sustainer suffices as a guide and helper.
[25:32] Those who disbelieved said, "Why did not the Quran come through him all at once?" We have released it to you gradually in order to inscribe it in your memory and We have recited it in a specific sequence.
[25:33] Whatever argument they come up with, We provide you with the truth and a better understanding.

[25:34] Those who are forcibly held accountable and end up in a state of hell are in the worst position. They are the farthest from the right path.
[25:35] We have given Moses the scripture and appointed his brother Aaron to be his assistant.
[25:36] We said, "Go, both of you to the people who rejected Our revelations." and subsequently, We completely annihilated the rejecters.
[25:37] Similarly, when the people of Noah disbelieved the messengers, We drowned them and We set them up as a sign for all the people. We have prepared for the corrupt a painful punishment.
[25:38] Also Ad, Thamoud, the inhabitants of Al-Russ and many generations between them.
[25:39] To each of these groups, We delivered sufficient examples, before We annihilated them.
[25:40] They have passed by the community that was overwhelmed with a miserable avalanche. Did they not see it? The fact is that they never believed in resurrection.

[629] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). The people who are supposedly devout: praying, fasting and taking part in every ritual say they believe in the Quran, but here the messenger is saying that *his* people have *deserted* the Quran. Why would he say this if they were keeping their duty to God and living their lives according to the Quran? The reality is this: they could not be further from the Quranic values and God's guidance. In truth they *have* deserted the Quran, while believing they have not. See verses and footnotes 25:32 & 2:185. See also verses 6:19; 12:106; 10:31. Demand for alternative narrations or hadith. See verse 17:73. God revealed the best Hadith. See verse 39:23.

THE MESSENGER MET WITH DERISION

[25:41] When they saw you, they always ridiculed you: "Is this the one chosen by God to be a messenger?

[25:42] "He almost diverted us from those whom we followed, if it were not that we steadfastly persevered with them." They will certainly find out, when they see the retribution, who has really strayed from the path.

THE EGO TO RANK WITH GOD

[25:43] Have you seen the one who holds his own Ego to rival God? Will you be his advocate?

[25:44] Do you think that most of them hear or understand? They are just like animals; no, they are far worse.[630]

SLEEP IS LIKE DEATH

[25:45] Have you not seen how your Sustainer designed the shadow? If He willed, He could have made it fixed, then We would have designed the sun accordingly.

[25:46] But We designed it to move slowly.

[25:47] He is the One who designed the night to be a cover for your sleep and rest. And He made the day a resurrection.[631]

[25:48] He is the One who sends the winds with good omens of His mercy and We send down from the sky pure water.

[25:49] With it, We revive dead lands and provide drink for Our creations, multitudes of animals and humans.

[25:50] We have distributed it among them in exact measure that they may take heed. But most people insist upon disbelieving.

[25:51] If We willed, We could have sent to every community a warner.

[25:52] Therefore, do not give in to the rejecters of this guidance but use it to strive against them; indeed a great endeavour.[632]

[25:53] He is the One who merges the two seas; one is fresh and palatable, while the other is salty and undrinkable. And He separated them with a formidable, inviolable barrier.

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[630] **The real reason** that some people don't believe in God is not that such belief is not intellectually possible but because belief in God compels the thinking person to face the fact that he is accountable to the ultimate Reckoner. The Quran is a challenge to atheism as much as it is a challenge to religion because both extremes are wrong. See verses 18:32; 20:123 & verse 7:179.

[631] **Just** as we are resurrected each time after a period of sleep, we will be awakened after death, but in a different form. Before we go to sleep we think about and prepare for the next day, so we should think and prepare for the life yet to come.

[632] **Strive,** struggle, venture, exert, endeavour. (Arabic: *jihad.* Root: J'H'D). Contrary to popular belief jihad does not mean 'holy war'. Jihad means to strive against something and in this verse it means to strive by following this guidance, the principles and values in this Quran, the criterion, as a weapon of knowledge. To be a good example is the greatest threat to the corrupt and the criminal. See verse and footnote 4:95.

[25:54] He is the One who caused the human being to emerge from water, then made him procreate through mating. Your Sustainer is All-powerful.
[25:55] Yet, they still set up beside God authorities that cannot benefit them, nor harm them. Indeed, the disbeliever is an enemy of his Sustainer.
[25:56] We have sent you as a deliverer of good news as well as a messenger to warn.
[25:57] Say: "I do not ask you for any money. All I seek is to help you find the right path to your Sustainer, if this is what you choose."

SERVE THE LIVING GOD

[25:58] You shall put your trust in the One God who is alive, the One God who never dies, and praise Him and glorify Him. He is fully aware of His creatures' wrongdoings.
[25:59] He is the One who created the heavens and the earth and everything between them in six periods, then assumed all authority. The Most Gracious; ask about Him from those who are well-founded in knowledge.

[25:60] When they are told, "Concede to the guidance of God Most Gracious," they say, "Who is the Most Gracious? Shall we consent to what you advocate?" Thus, it only augments their aversion.
[25:61] Most blessed is the One who placed constellations in the sky and placed in it a lamp and a reflecting moon.[633]
[25:62] He is the One who designed the night and the day to succeed each other, a sufficient sign for those who wish to take heed and to be appreciative.

VIRTUES OF THE RIGHTEOUS

[25:63] Those who serve God Most Gracious are those who tread the earth with modesty and when the ignorant speak to them, they only express messages of peace.
[25:64] In the privacy of the night they reflect on the guidance from their Sustainer and declare their compliance to it.
[25:65] And they say, "Our Sustainer, spare us the agony and torment; and a retribution that is horrendous.
[25:66] "It is the worst and enduring punishment; the worst end."
[25:67] When they give, they are neither extravagant nor miserly; they give in moderation.

[633] **The moon** does not have its own light but reflects the sunlight. This is something that was unlikely to have been known before the revelation in the Quran.

GOOD DEEDS NULLIFY BAD DEEDS

[25:68] They never implore beside God any other authority as to equal Him, nor do they kill anyone, except in the course of justice, for God has made life sacred, nor do they commit fornication or adultery. Those who commit these offenses will have to suffer the consequences.[634]
[25:69] Retribution is intensified for them on the Day of Resurrection and they endure it therein humiliated.
[25:70] Exempt are those who repent, believe and lead a righteous life. By God's ordinance, past wrongful actions are transformed to good deeds by their own good works. God is the Protector and the Most Merciful.[635]
[25:71] Those who repent and lead a righteous life, God redeems them; a complete redemption.

THE RIGHTEOUS ACCEPT GOD'S GUIDANCE

[25:72] They do not bear false witness. When they encounter vain things, they pass by them with dignity.
[25:73] When reminded of their Sustainer's guidance, they never react to it as if they are deaf and blind.
[25:74] And they say, "Our Sustainer, let our spouses and children be a source of joy for us and keep us in the forefront of the righteous."
[25:75] These are the ones who attain peace and harmony in return for their steadfastness; they are received with happy greetings and peace.
[25:76] Eternally they abide therein; what a beautiful destination, what a beautiful abode.
[25:77] Say: "You achieve high regard at my Sustainer only through your service to Him[636]. But if you reject His guidance, you incur the inevitable consequences."

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[634] **Fornication/adultery:** (Arabic: *zinna*). Consensual Illicit sexual intercourse. The Quran makes no distinction between adultery and fornication, both are termed as Illicit sex. See verse and footnote 24:4.

[635] **The message** in the Quran is a call to belief, action and ultimate accountability to God. Belief is impressing our Self with the divine blueprint; actions is the manifestation of the belief and accountability is showing responsibility for our actions**.** Being virtuous is overcoming our regressive egotistic Self - the Iblees within us. It is virtuous deeds - the actions - that overcome the hurdles, the challenges of life, not passive prayer. It is in religion that individuals seek mercy and grace through a saviour. In Deen-Islam it is the good deeds that glorify God [verse 21:20], and God dignifies mankind by giving the opportunities for Self development and raising their own eminence. It is the *good works* that rescind the evil works. **Hands that work** are better than lips that pray: *a person may believe in the power of prayer, but if caught in a blazing fire, would he prefer someone to pull him out or pray for him?* Also read verses 25:72-77. See verse 11:114.

[636] **God** does not need us or our service. He is self-sufficient. Service to God is for all intents and purposes a service to mankind, because when this guidance is followed we fulfil our commitments and obligations to ourselves, our families and our communities. We in fact become the benefactors of mankind. In return we develop our Self, making it fit for the next stage of life - the Life yet to come. See verses 51:57; 64:6.

Sura 26: The Poets (Al-Shu'ara)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[26:1] T. S. M.
[26:2] These are the signs of this revelation; a book of clear guidance.
[26:3] You may distress yourself that they do not believe.
[26:4] If We will, We can send from the sky a sign that forces them to yield.
[26:5] Whenever a reminder from God Most Gracious comes to them, they turn away in aversion.
[26:6] Since they reject this guidance, they have incurred the consequences of their derision.
[26:7] Have they not seen the earth and how many kinds of beautiful plants We have grown thereon?
[26:8] In these there are sufficient signs for them, but most of them will not believe.[637]
[26:9] Most assuredly, the One who sustains all these things is the Almighty and the Most Merciful.

MOSES AND THE MAGICIANS

[26:10] Recall that your Sustainer called Moses: "Go to the transgressing people.
[26:11] "Firawn's people, perhaps they will reform."
[26:12] He said, "My Sustainer, I fear lest they disbelieve me.
[26:13] "I may lose my temper and my tongue gets tied. Send with me, my brother Aaron.[638]
[26:14] "Also, they consider me a fugitive and I fear lest they kill me."
[26:15] He said, "No, they will not. Go with My signs. We will be with you, listening.
[26:16] "Go to Firawn and say, `We are messengers from the Sustainer of the universe.'
[26:17] " `Let the Children of Israel go with us.' "
[26:18] Firawn said, "Did we not raise you from infancy and you spent many years with us?
[26:19] "Then you committed a dreadful crime and you were ungrateful."
[26:20] He said, "Indeed, I did it when I was astray.
[26:21] "Then I fled when I feared you and my Sustainer endowed me with wisdom and made me one of the messengers.
[26:22] "You chide me about a favour you did in the past, while enslaving the Children of Israel."

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[637] **The magnificent** tapestry of plants, the intricate mathematical sequences involved in the natural world. There are many signs of the One who designed these wonders and we can go on a journey of discovery to unravel these signs. See verses and footnotes 16:68-69; 67:2.
[638] **Moses** had a speech impediment, a stammer and asked for his brother's help.

[26:23] Firawn said, "Who is this Sustainer of the universe?"
[26:24] He said, "The Sustainer of the heavens and the earth and everything between them. You should know about Him."
[26:25] Firawn said to those around him, "Did you hear this?"
[26:26] Moses said, "Your Sustainer and the Sustainer of your ancestors."
[26:27] Firawn said, "This messenger who is sent to you is possessed."
[26:28] Moses said, "The Sustainer of the east and the west and everything between them, if you understand."
[26:29] Firawn said, "If you accept any authority other than me, I will throw you in prison."[639]
[26:30] Moses said, "What if I show you something profound?"
[26:31] Firawn said, "Then show it, if you are truthful."
[26:32] Moses then threw his staff, whereupon it manifested as a snake.
[26:33] And he took out his hand and it was bright to the beholders.
[26:34] Firawn said to the elders around him, "This is an experienced magician.
[26:35] "He wants to evict you out of your land with his magic. What do you suggest?"
[26:36] They said, "Respite him and his brother and send announcers to every town.
[26:37] "Let them summon every experienced magician."
[26:38] The magicians were gathered at the appointed time, on the appointed day.
[26:39] The people were told: "Come one and all; let us gather together here.
[26:40] "Maybe we will follow the magicians, if they are the winners."
[26:41] When the magicians came, they said to Firawn, "Do we get paid, if we are the winners?"
[26:42] He said, "Yes indeed; you will even be close to me."
[26:43] Moses said to them "Throw what you are going to throw."
[26:44] They threw their ropes and sticks and said, "By Firawn's majesty, we will be the victors."
[26:45] Moses threw his staff, whereupon it swallowed all that they had fabricated.

THE MAGICIANS BECOME AWARE OF THE REALITY

[26:46] The magicians conceded to Moses' superior works.
[26:47] They said, "We believe in the Sustainer of the universe.

[639] **Firawn** is 'god' as far as his people are concerned. They have set him up as an authority equal to God, but it is Firawn who will be held accountable for his corruption and exploitations, by the One God who is supreme. Firawn is represented as a symbol of all political powers. The same controls, oppressions and aggressions can now be seen in the politically powerful nations of today. Likewise, Haman represents the priesthood, the intellectual exploiters and Qaroon represents corruption and exploitation of the economic system. See verses 28:6; 28:76.

[26:48] "The sustainer of Moses and Aaron."
[26:49] He said, "Did you believe with him before I give you permission? He must be your teacher who taught you magic. You will surely find out. I will cut your hands and feet on alternate sides. I will crucify you all."
[26:50] They said, "This will not change our decision. To our Sustainer we will return.
[26:51] "We hope that our Sustainer will forgive us our wrongdoings, especially that we are now the first to believe."

[26:52] We inspired Moses: "Escape with My servants, but you will be pursued."
[26:53] Firawn sent announcers to the towns
[26:54] proclaiming, "This is a small group.
[26:55] "They are now opposing us.
[26:56] "Let us all beware of them."
[26:57] Consequently, We deprived them of gardens and springs.
[26:58] And treasures and an honourable position.
[26:59] Then We made it an inheritance for the Children of Israel.
[26:60] They pursued them towards the east.
[26:61] When both parties saw each other, Moses' people said, "We will be caught."
[26:62] He said, "I think not. My Sustainer is with me. He will guide me."
[26:63] We then inspired Moses: "Set forth through the water with your staff where has it is parted and a way made like a valley.
[26:64] We then delivered them all.
[26:65] We thus saved Moses and all those who were with him.
[26:66] And We drowned the others.
[26:67] In this should be sufficient signs, but most people will not believe.
[26:68] Most assuredly, your Sustainer is the Almighty, Most Merciful.

ABRAHAM: SERVE NONE BUT GOD

[26:69] Narrate to them Abraham's history.
[26:70] He said to his father and his people, "What is this you are worshipping?"
[26:71] They said, "We worship these stone idols. We are totally devoted to them."[640]

[640] **Worshipping** stone idols was a common trait of pagans in the past and even exists in modern times. The *mushrikeen* and the idol worshippers, those who set up authority to rank with God, say, it is not the idols that they worship but use them as a point of focus during prayer. **Stone worship:** In some religions they do not have carved stone idols but revere coloured misshaped stones which they touch and kiss for blessings. This is remnant of the Vedic religious culture practiced by Hindus in South India and is still widely prevalent elsewhere too; Vikram Aditya (born 101 B.C.) ruled Arabia where Hinduism flourished for a long time. Kissing and touching stones for

[26:72] He said, "Can they hear you when you implore?
[26:73] "Can they benefit you or harm you?"
[26:74] They said, "No, but we found our parents doing this."
[26:75] He said, "Do you see these idols that you worship.
[26:76] "You and your ancestors.
[26:77] "I am against them, for I am devoted only to the Sustainer of the universe.[641]
[26:78] "The One who created me and guides me.
[26:79] "The One who feeds me and gives me water to drink.
[26:80] "And when I get sick, He heals me.
[26:81] "The One who puts me to death, then brings me back to life.
[26:82] "The One who I believe will protect me in the established Order from my wrongs.
[26:83] "My Sustainer, grant me wisdom and include me with the righteous.
[26:84] "Let the example I set for the future generations be a good one.
[26:85] "Make me one of the inheritors of Peace and Harmony.
[26:86] "And protect my father from wrong deeds, for he has gone astray.
[26:87] "And do not forsake me on the Day of Resurrection."
[26:88] That is the day when neither money nor children can help.
[26:89] Only those who come to God wholeheartedly by virtue of their deeds will progress.
[26:90] Paradise will be presented to the righteous.
[26:91] A torment of hell will be set up for those who strayed.

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blessings is abhorrent to muslims because it is degrading to show reverence to such an object. Muslims *serve* God alone by following His laws and adhering to the values given in the Quran. This benefits not only mankind but also develops the Self to make it fit for the next stage in evolution. See verses and footnotes 2:105; 37:91 and 34:13. **Religion** (theistic or non-theistic) is a set of arbitrary rules (rites and rituals) to benefit the priesthood, leadership and the elite. When people believe in an authority other than God, then *zulm*, the displacement of order takes over. This emerges as the rule by divine right, slavery, genocide, exploitation and other such regressive ideas. People accept these models because they believe no other alternative exists. Even today alongside religions, economic control by a powerful minority exists, and this fraud of the public will continue to persist with lethal results because people believe this is the way things are. Radicalisation is a term that has often been wrongly applied to Deen-Islam. While it is true that the concepts in the Quran are thorough and far reaching because they seek strict disciplinary measures to overturn corrupt and unjust ideas, it is wrong to say that they are cruel and oppressive. Radicalisation itself is not necessarily negative. The Quran instructs muslims to initiate sweeping changes, and these may indeed be radical in the sense that they are profound. However, these challenges are there to improve mankind's situation and move them forward to a better future. See verses and footnotes 2:30; 7:201; 10:109; 65:11. See also 37:125-128**. What is evil:** see verse and footnote 7:201. **What is zulm?** See verses and footnotes 27:11; 35:20; 65:11.

[641] **Following** your parents blindly is one of the greatest human tragedies. Not long after your birth, they decide your name, nationality, religion and sect. And you spend the rest of your life defending something you did not even choose. See verse 37:74.

[26:92] They will be asked, "Where are the false authorities you served
[26:93] "to equal or rival God? Can they help you now? Can they help themselves?"
[26:94] They will be thrown therein, together with those who deviated.
[26:95] And all those who followed Iblees; their egotistic Self.
[26:96] They will say as they feud therein,
[26:97] "By God, we were far astray.
[26:98] "How could we set up our egotistic Self to rank with the Sustainer of the universe?
[26:99] "Those who misled us were wicked.
[26:100] "Now we have no intercessors.
[26:101] "Nor a single close friend.
[26:102] "If only we could get another chance, we would then believe and follow the guidance."
[26:103] This should be a good lesson. But most people will not believe.
[26:104] Your Sustainer is the Almighty, Most Merciful.

NOAH: WEALTH NOT A SIGN OF GOODNESS

[26:105] The people of Noah disbelieved the messengers.
[26:106] Their brother Noah said to them, "Would you not be righteous?
[26:107] "I am an honest messenger to you.
[26:108] "You shall fulfil your duty to God and obey me.
[26:109] "I do not ask you for any money. My reward comes from the Sustainer of the universe.
[26:110] "You shall reverence God and obey me."
[26:111] They said, "How can we believe with you when the worst among us have followed you?"
[26:112] He said, "How do I know what they did?
[26:113] "Their judgment rests only with my Sustainer, if you could understand.
[26:114] "I will never dismiss anyone who wants to believe in the guidance.
[26:115] "I am no more than a clear warner."
[26:116] They said, "Unless you refrain, O Noah, you will be stoned."[642]
[26:117] He said, "My Sustainer, my people have disbelieved me.
[26:118] "Grant me victory against them and deliver me and my group of believers."
[26:119] We delivered him and those with him in the loaded craft.
[26:120] Then We drowned the others.
[26:121] This should be a lesson but most people will not believe.
[26:122] Most assuredly, your Sustainer is the Almighty, Most Merciful.

[642] **Stoning** as a punishment is not decreed in the Quran. In the Quran stoning is only carried out by pagans, disbelievers and those who reject this guidance. See verse 11:91.

HUD: SHOW APPRECIATION

[26:123] Aad disbelieved the messengers.
[26:124] Their brother Hud said to them, "Would you not be righteous?
[26:125] "I am an honest messenger to you.
[26:126] "You shall fulfil your duty to God and obey me.
[26:127] "I do not ask you for any money. My reward comes from the sustainer of the universe.
[26:128] "You build on every hill a mansion for vanity's sake.
[26:129] "You set up buildings as if you will last forever.
[26:130] "And when you strike, you strike mercilessly.
[26:131] "You shall fulfil your duty to God and obey me.
[26:132] "Reverence the One who provided you with all the things you know.
[26:133] "He provided you with livestock and children.
[26:134] "And gardens and springs.
[26:135] "I fear for you the retribution of an awesome day."
[26:136] They said, "It is the same to us whether you teach this guidance or not.
[26:137] "That affliction was limited to our ancestors.
[26:138] "No retribution will ever befall us."
[26:139] They thus disbelieved and consequently We annihilated them. This should be a lesson but most people will not believe.
[26:140] Most assuredly your Sustainer is the Almighty, Most Merciful.

SALEH: PRACTICE RESTRAINT

[26:141] Thamoud disbelieved the messengers.
[26:142] Their brother Saleh said to them, "Would you not be righteous?
[26:143] "I am an honest messenger to you.
[26:144] "You shall fulfil your duty to God and obey me.
[26:145] "I do not ask you for any money. My reward comes only from the sustainer of the universe.
[26:146] "Do you suppose you will be left forever, secure in this state?
[26:147] "You enjoy gardens and springs.
[26:148] "And crops and date palms with delicious fruits.
[26:149] "You carve out of the mountains luxurious mansions.
[26:150] "You shall reverence God and obey me.
[26:151] "Do not obey the transgressors.
[26:152] "Who commit evil, not good works."
[26:153] They said, "You are bewitched.
[26:154] "You are no more than a human like us. Produce a sign, if you are truthful."
[26:155] He said, "Here is a camel that will drink only on a day that is assigned to her. A day that is different from your specified days of drinking.

[26:156] "As a restraint and discipline do not touch her with any harm, lest you incur retribution on an awesome day."
[26:157] They slaughtered her and thus incurred grief.
[26:158] The retribution overwhelmed them. This should be a lesson, but most people will not believe.[643]
[26:159] Most assuredly, your Sustainer is the Almighty, Most Merciful.

LOT: MORAL PRINCIPLES

[26:160] The people of Lot disbelieved the messengers.[644]
[26:161] Their brother Lot said to them, "Would you not be righteous?
[26:162] "I am an honest messenger to you.
[26:163] "You shall reverence God and obey me.
[26:164] "I do not ask you for any money. My reward comes only from the sustainer of the universe.
[26:165] "Do your men have sex with men,
[26:166] "And forsake your women that your Sustainer has created for you? Indeed, you are a corrupt community."
[26:167] They said, "Unless you refrain, O Lot, you will be banished."
[26:168] He said, "I condemn your actions."
[26:169] "My Sustainer, save me and my family from their works."
[26:170] We saved him and all his family.
[26:171] But not his wife, she was doomed.
[26:172] We then destroyed the others.
[26:173] We deluged them with a miserable avalanche. What a terrible shower for those who had been warned.
[26:174] This should be a lesson, but most people will not believe.
[26:175] Most assuredly your Sustainer is the Almighty, Most Merciful.

SHU'AIB: FAIR TRADING STANDARDS

[26:176] The people of the forest disbelieved the messengers.
[26:177] Shu'aib said to them, "Would you not be righteous?
[26:178] "I am an honest messenger to you.
[26:179] "You shall fulfil your duty to God and obey me.

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[643] **Camel:** this was a test and symbol of self-discipline. See verse and footnote 91:14.

[644] **Inclinations** can exist within humans for a variety of natural and unnatural acts, from heberphilia to fornication and rape, from necrophilia to bestiality. A Permanent Law is something which is applicable irrespective of society or their ruler's wishes. The Absolute Laws and Permanent Value are put in place to create an environment and a society where the Self can grow and develop and realise its full potential. This means discipline and restraint to bring out the best in an individual's personality for the welfare and progress of society. Just as a paedophile lusting after a child must bridle himself from carrying out his perverted desires, so must an homophile contain his or her passion for same-sex gratification. See verses and footnotes 7:80; 11:77-82; 27:55; 29:29.

[26:180] "I do not ask you for any payment; my reward comes only from the Sustainer of the universe.
[26:181] "You shall give full measure when you trade, do not cheat.
[26:182] "You shall weigh with an equitable scale.
[26:183] "Do not cheat any of the people out of their rights and do not go around the world corrupting everything.
[26:184] "Fulfil your duty to the One who created you and the previous generations."
[26:185] They said, "You are bewitched.
[26:186] "You are no more than a human being like us. In fact, we think you are a liar.
[26:187] "Let masses from the sky fall on us, if you are truthful."
[26:188] He said, "My Sustainer is the One who knows everything you do."
[26:189] They disbelieved him and, consequently they incurred the retribution of the avalanche. It was the retribution of an awesome day.
[26:190] This should be a lesson, but most people will not believe.
[26:191] Most assuredly, your Sustainer is the Almighty, Most Merciful.

THE QURAN: CLEAR ARABIC AND SHOULD BE TRANSLATED

[26:192] This is a revealed guidance from the Sustainer of the universe.
[26:193] The Ruh-ul-Amin imparted it.[645]
[26:194] To reveal it into your heart that you may be one of those who warn.
[26:195] In a clear Arabic language.
[26:196] It has been promised in the books of previous generations.
[26:197] Is it not a sufficient sign for them that it was known to the scholars among the Children of Israel?
[26:198] If We revealed this to people who do not know Arabic.
[26:199] And had them recite it in Arabic, they could not possibly understand it or believe in it.[646]
[26:200] To the hearts of the guilty it seems empty. Thus it is perceived by the minds of the corrupt.

[26:201] Thus, they cannot believe in this guidance; not until they face the painful retribution.
[26:202] It will come to them suddenly, when they least expect it.
[26:203] They will then say, "Can we have a respite?"
[26:204] Did they not challenge Our punishment?
[26:205] As you see, We allowed them to enjoy life for many years.
[26:206] Then the retribution came to them, just as promised.

[645] **Ruh-ul-Amin:** The Energy of Peace. Ruh is the directive energy *from* God, but not *of* God.
[646] **The Quran** is a book of guidance, first revealed in Arabic because the first recipients were Arabs. For the message to reach speakers of other languages it is necessary to translate it into all the languages of the world, while retaining the original and true message and guidance from God.

[26:207] Their vast resources did not help them in the least.
[26:208] We never annihilate any community without first sending a warning.
[26:209] Therefore, this is a reminder, for We are never unjust.
[26:210] No evil egotistic Self can ever impart such guidance as this.[647]
[26:211] No such individual neither would, nor could.
[26:212] For they are prevented from such understanding.
[26:213] Therefore, do not serve beside God any other authority to equal Him, lest you incur the retribution.
[26:214] You shall first teach this to the people who are closest to you.
[26:215] And lower the wings of humility for the believers who follow you.
[26:216] If they disobey you, then say, "I disown what you do."
[26:217] And put your trust in the Almighty, Most Merciful.
[26:218] Who sees you when you meditate during the night.
[26:219] And sees your submissions.
[26:220] He is the Hearer, aware of all things.
[26:221] Shall I inform you upon whom the evil descends?
[26:222] They descend upon every guilty fabricator.
[26:223] They pretend to listen, but most of them are liars.
[26:224] As for the poets, they are followed only by those who stray.
[26:225] Do you not see that their loyalty shifts according to the situation?
[26:226] And that they say what they do not do?
[26:227] Exempted are those who believe, lead a righteous life, commemorate God frequently and stand up for their rights. Surely, the corrupt will find out where their ultimate destination is.[648]

[647] **No corrupt** individual could ever impart profound guidance such as contained in this Quran. How could a fabricator produce a book of truth, justice and guidance for all mankind?
[648] **Stand up for your rights** and fight to win is the clear message in the Quran. See verses and footnotes 4:75-78; 8:16-19; 8:58; 42:39. **Peace at any price?** See verse and footnote 47:35.

Sura 27: The Ant (Al-Naml)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[27:1] T. S. These are the signs of this Quran, a book of clear guidance.[649]
[27:2] A guiding beacon and good news for the believers.
[27:3] Who observe their commitments and keep them pure and they, with regards to the continuation of life are absolutely certain.[650]
[27:4] Those who do not believe in the life yet to come, in their eyes their actions seem good to them, while they continue to transgress the limits of this guidance.
[27:5] It is these who attract the most severe punishment as a consequence of their works and in the Hereafter, they will be the worst losers.
[27:6] Without a doubt you have received this Quran from the One who is Most Wise and aware of all things.

MOSES ON THE MOUNT

[27:7] Recall that Moses said to his family, "I see a fire; let me bring you news from there or a torch to warm you."
[27:8] When he came to it, he was called: "Sanctified is the One who speaks to you and brought you the fire and those around it are set apart from other people." Glory be to God, sustainer of the universe.
[27:9] "O Moses, this is I, the One God, the Almighty and Most Wise.
[27:10] "Throw down your staff." When he saw it moving like a serpent, he turned around to flee. "O Moses, do not be afraid. My messengers have nothing to fear,
[27:11] "excluding those who create discord, and excepting those who after generating conflict substitute it for righteousness. I am the Protector and the Most Merciful.[651]
[27:12] "Put your hand in your pocket; it will come out bright without a blemish. These are among nine the signs to Firawn and his people, for they are a corrupt community."
[27:13] When Our signs were presented to them, clear and profound, they said, "This is obviously magic."

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[649] **The Quran:** literally the recitation. See verses and footnotes 27:6 & verse 2:185.

[650] **This world** is an environment for the development of the Self and death is a transition to the next stage of life, easy progression for those who have realised their potential and a tormenting rut for those who have wasted the opportunities. Those who understand this guidance are certain of the life yet to come. See verse and footnote 2:4.

[651] **Discord/Displacement**: (Arabic: *zulm*). *Zulm* is an exceptionally rich word that cannot easily be translated. It is the autonym of *islam*: to harmonise and achieve peace by submission to the Permanent Values in the Quran, and *zulm* means to create discord by displacement of those values by creating disorder, rebellion and insurrection. See verses and footnotes 2:191-193. See also 7:201; 65:11.

[27:14] They rejected them and were entirely convinced that their evil works were good, due to their arrogance. Note the consequences for those who do evil.[652]

SOLOMON AND THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

[27:15] We endowed David and Solomon with knowledge and they said, "Praise God for exalting us more than many of His believing servants."
[27:16] Solomon was David's heir. He said, "O mankind, We have been endowed with the understanding of how birds communicate and all kinds of things have been bestowed upon us. This is indeed real approval from God."
[27:17] Mobilised in the service of Solomon were his obedient soldiers some who were covert and others overt, as well as the animals; all at his disposal.
[27:18] When Solomon's troops approached a valley and the ants started instinctively to move aside towards their homes, it seemed lest they inadvertently got crushed by Solomon and his soldiers.
[27:19] He was impressed, smiled at seeing this and said, "My Sustainer, direct me to be appreciative of the blessings You have bestowed upon me and my parents and to do the righteous works that please You. Admit me by Your mercy into the company of Your righteous servants."

[27:20] Solomon looked around and noted: "Why do I not see Hud-Hud? Why is he missing?
[27:21] "I will punish him severely or forfeit him, unless he gives me a good excuse."
[27:22] He did not have to wait long. Hud-Hud arrived and said, "I have news that you do not have. I have brought to you from the land of Sheba some important information.
[27:23] "I found a woman ruling them who is blessed with everything and possesses a tremendous palace.
[27:24] "I found her and her people prostrating before the sun instead of serving God. To their egotistic Self, their deeds seem good in their eyes. But their ego has diverted them from the right path; consequently, they are not guided."
[27:25] They should have conceded to God's guidance, the One who opens all the secrets in the heavens and the earth and the One who knows everything you conceal and everything you declare.
[27:26] God, there is no other authority to rank with Him, the Sustainer with a dominion beyond measure.
[27:27] Solomon said, "We will see if you told the truth or if you are a liar.
[27:28] "Take this letter from me, give it to them then wait for their response."

[652] **What is evil?** See verse and footnote 7:201

THE LETTER FROM SOLOMON

[27:29] She said, "O my advisers, I have received an honourable letter.
[27:30] "It is from Solomon and it is `In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent,[653]
[27:31] "proclaiming: `Do not be arrogant; come to me as submitters to God.'
[27:32] She said, "O my advisers counsel me in this matter. I will not decide anything until after I have consulted you."
[27:33] They said, "We possess the power, we possess the fighting skills but the ultimate decision is in your hand. We will do as you command."
[27:34] She said, "The kings corrupt any land they invade and subjugate its dignified and ruling people. This is what they usually do.
[27:35] "I am sending some gifts to Solomon. Let us see what the messengers come back with."
[27:36] When Hud-Hud returned with the news of what he had heard and Solomon responded to the Queen of Sheba: "Are you giving me gifts? What God has given me is far better than what He has given you. You are the ones to rejoice in such gifts."
[27:37] He said to Hud-Hud, "Go back to them and let them know that we will come to them with forces they cannot imagine. We will evict them, humiliate them and debase them."

MODEL OF THE QUEEN'S PALACE

[27:38] Solomon said, "O you elders, which of you can build me a replica of her palace, before they arrive here as submitters to God's ordinance?"
[27:39] One intelligent individual from the covert servants said, "I can build it swiftly and raise your status. I am powerful enough and trustworthy to do this."
[27:40] The one who possessed more knowledge and better guidance said, "I can erect it for you in the blink of an eye." When Solomon saw it settled in front of him, he said, "This is a blessing from my Sustainer and He tests me to show whether I am appreciative or unappreciative. Whoever is appreciative, is appreciative for his own good and if one turns ungrateful then my Sustainer, Most Honourable is in no need of him."
[27:41] He said, "Here is her remodelled palace for her. Let us see if she will be guided or continue with the misguided."
[27:42] When she arrived, she was asked, "Does your palace look like this?" She said, "It seems that this is it." Solomon said, "We knew beforehand what you were going to do, and we are already submitters."

[653] **In the name of God...** This sura has two such invocations and sura nine has none. **An example** of how to start a letter, but only from persons who are conducting virtuous work.

[27:43] She had been diverted to worshipping idols instead of serving God. She came from the disbelieving people.
[27:44] She was invited, "Go inside the palace." When she saw its interior, she thought there was a pool of water and she pulled up her dress, exposing her legs. He said, "This interior is paved with crystal." She realised her mistake and said, "By the One who sustains me, I have wronged my Self. I now submit, along with Solomon, to the One God, the sustainer of the universe."

SALEH - GOD PROTECTS THE BELIEVERS

[27:45] We sent to Thamoud their brother Saleh, saying, "You shall serve God." But they turned into two feuding sects.
[27:46] He said, "O my people, why do you hasten to commit evil instead of good works? If only you implore God for protection from wrongdoing, you may attain mercy."[654]
[27:47] They said, "We consider you a bad omen for us, you and those who joined you." He said, "Even your omens are fully controlled by God. Indeed, you are deviant people being tested."
[27:48] There was a gang of nine mischief-makers in the city who were wicked and never did anything good.
[27:49] They said, "Let us swear by God that we kill him and his people, when his family ask about it, then say, 'We know nothing about his death.' We are truthful."
[27:50] They conspired and schemed, but We also planned and took action, while they did not perceive.
[27:51] Note the consequences of their plotting: We annihilated them and all their people.
[27:52] Their homes utterly ruined because of their transgression. This should be a lesson for people who understand.
[27:53] Consistent with Our ordinance, We save those who believe in the guidance and follow it with a righteous life.

LOT CONDEMNS IMMORALITY

[27:54] Lot said to his people, "How could you commit such an abomination openly and bear witness to it?
[27:55] "Your men practice sex with the men, ravenously, instead of your women. Indeed, you are a people in moral darkness."[655]
[27:56] The only response from his people was their saying, "Banish Lot's family from this town. They are people who believe are pure and superior."

[654] **To break away** from Deen-Islam and form a sect that conflicts with the Quran is 'shirk': the crime of setting up an authority to rank with God. See verse and footnote 6:159.
[655] **Sodomy** forbidden. See verses 7:80-84; 11:77-82; 26:160-175; 29:29.

[27:57] Consequently, We saved him and his family, except his wife; We counted her among the doomed.
[27:58] We deluged them with a destructive avalanche. It was a crushing that overwhelmed the people who had been warned.

GOD CREATES AND DIRECTS THE UNIVERSE

[27:59] Say: "Praise be to God and peace be upon His servants whom He chose as messengers. Is God's guidance better or the authorities they fabricate to rival God?"
[27:60] Who is the One who created the heavens and the earth? Who is the One who sends down to you water from the sky, whereby We produce orchards full of beauty - you could not possibly create its trees. Is it another god besides the One God? Indeed, they are people who have deviated.
[27:61] Who is the One who made the earth habitable, caused rivers to run through it, placed on it mountains and created a barrier between the fresh and salt water? Is it another creator equal to the One God? Indeed, most of them do not know.
[27:62] Who is the One who rescues those who become desperate and call upon Him, relieves adversity and made you successors on the earth? Is there another protector equal to the One God? Rarely do you take heed.
[27:63] Who is the One who guides you in the darkness of land and on the sea? Who is the One who sends the winds with good news and signs of His mercy? Is there another power equal to the One God? Most exalted is God, above having any equals.
[27:64] Who is the One who initiates a creation, then repeats it? Who is the One who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? Is it another initiator equal to the One God? Say: "Show me your proof, if you are truthful."
[27:65] Say: "No one in the heavens and the earth knows the future except God. They cannot even understand how or when they will be resurrected."
[27:66] Any knowledge concerning the Hereafter bemuses them. In fact, they harbour doubts about it and they are totally heedless about it.[656]
[27:67] Those who disbelieve say, "After we turn into dust, as did our forefathers, do we get brought forth again?
[27:68] "We had been given the same promise before. These are nothing but tales from the past."

[656] **Natural** history and the evolutionary process provides us with a great deal of information that is evidence of a continuous life: the hereafter. Matter cannot be destroyed, it just changes from one type of matter to another, as does energy. So why should the Self not survive change and even death? The world is a matrix that enables the Self to develop by its own endeavour - by the moral choices it makes with its *free will*. It is a world of the survival of the fittest, the Self that endures and survives death goes on to a higher plane of existence. When we understand this it is easy to accept this guidance which provides the means for Self development in preparation for the life yet to come. See verses and footnotes 27:3; 36:82. Also see verse 6:132 and footnote.

[27:69] Say: "Travel the earth and note the consequences of the guilty."
[27:70] Do not grieve over them and do not be aggravated by their scheming.
[27:71] They say, "When will that promise come to pass, if you are truthful?"
[27:72] Say: "You are already suffering some of the retribution you challenge."[657]
[27:73] Your Sustainer is full of grace towards all the people but most of them are unappreciative.
[27:74] Your Sustainer fully knows what their hearts hide and what they declare.
[27:75] There is nothing in the heavens and the earth that is hidden from God. Everything is in a profound record.
[27:76] This Quran settles many issues for the Children of Israel, issues that they are still disputing.[658]
[27:77] And most assuredly this is a guide and a mercy for the believers.
[27:78] Your Sustainer is the One who judges among them in accordance with His ordinance. He is the Almighty and aware of all things.
[27:79] Therefore, put your trust in God. You are following the manifest truth.
[27:80] You cannot make the dead nor the deaf hear the call, if they turn away from the truth.
[27:81] Nor can you guide the blind out of their straying. The only ones who will hear you are those who are receptive to this guidance and choose to submit to it.
[27:82] As a fulfilment of Our word We will produce for them a creation on the earth to inform those people who are not certain about Our revealed guidance.
[27:83] The day will come when from every community some of those who did not believe will be compelled to reflect.
[27:84] Then forced to answer God who will say, "You have rejected My guidance before acquiring knowledge about it. Is this not what you did?"
[27:85] They will incur a punishment for their wickedness; they will have nothing to say.
[27:86] Have they not seen that We made the night for their rest and the day lighted? These should be sufficient signs for people who believe.

[657] **Like heaven,** hell begins here. Look around you and you can see throughout the world there is extreme suffering as a consequence of what people do or don't do. See verse and footnote 8:25.
[658] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verse and footnote 2:185.

[27:87] On the day when the end is signalled, everyone in the heavens and the earth will be in awe, except those exalted by their works through God's ordinance. All will come before Him, humbled.

[27:88] When you look at the mountains, which you now think are standing firm, they will pass away as the clouds. Such is the construct of God, who perfected everything. He is fully aware of everything you do.

[27:89] Those who bring good works will accumulate good and receive far better rewards and they will be perfectly secure from the horrors of that day.

[27:90] As for those who bring evil works, they will be forced into a hell of their own making. Do you not get punished for what you did?[659]

[27:91] Say: "I am simply commanded to serve the One who sustains this place, He has made it a safe sanctuary and He possesses all things. I am commanded to be a submitter,

[27:92] and to follow this guidance of the Quran." Whoever is guided is guided for his own good and if they go astray then say, "I have come only to warn."[660]

[27:93] And say, "Praise be to God; He will show you His signs so that you embark to discover them. Your Sustainer is never unaware of anything you do."[661]

[659] **Hell is a life of anguish,** whether in this world or the next. People in hell are neither living or dying, since their Self, their personality makes no progress. Even though they may know the truth, their rejection of it keeps them from advancing. When they realise the result of their wrongdoing they enter into a relentless state of regret that they should have done something to secure their worth. God does not punish anyone, His law of Requital ensures that reward and punishment are logical consequences of an individual's deeds. Hell (or heaven) begins here in this world. A society living in peace and security, in line with Quranic values, is heaven and those who displace these values live in fear and turmoil. We build our own heaven and hell, with hell being a stagnant existence with no development.

[660] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verse and footnote 2:185. The messenger is instructed to follow the Quran and not any other books as guidance. See verse 6:50.

[661] **The Quran** points out the perfection of the universe and those who possess intelligence will unfold, unravel and discover the wonders of this creation and use them for the benefit of mankind. Scientists are, of course, doing this now. See verse and footnote 3:190.

Sura 28: The History (Al-Qasas)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[28:1] T. S. M.
[28:2] These are the signs of this revelation: a book of clear guidance.
[28:3] We recite to you herein some history of Moses and Firawn, truthfully, for the benefit of people who believe.
[28:4] Firawn was a dictator on earth and divided people into religious castes. He oppressed a group of them and slaughtered their sons, while defiling their daughters. He was indeed corrupt.[662]
[28:5] We willed to compensate, consistent with Our ordinance, those who were oppressed and to turn them into leaders and make them the inheritors.
[28:6] And to establish them on earth and to show Firawn, Haman and their troops that which they most feared from the people.[663]

MOSES BEGINS HIS JOURNEY

[28:7] We inspired Moses' mother: "Nurse him and when you dread for his life, cast him in his cradle into the river without fear or grief. We will return him to you and will make him one of Our messengers."
[28:8] Firawn's family picked him up, unsuspecting, only to have him later lead an opposition and to be a source of grief for them. That is because Firawn, Haman and their troops were transgressors.
[28:9] Firawn's wife said, "This can be a joyous find for me and you. Do not kill him for he may be of some benefit for us or we may adopt him to be our son." They had no idea what they had done.
[28:10] The mind of Moses' mother was growing so anxious that she almost gave away his identity. But We strengthened her heart so she may remain a steadfast believer.

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[662] **Divide and rule** - creating sectarian hatred and violence, setting one group against another as a mechanism to instil fear to control the populace is a key feature of powerful oppressive regimes. The Europeans did this when they spread out to conquer other countries and continents. Also the super powers of today are creating divisions and spawning 'freedom fighters' around the world to cause instability and mayhem for profit and power. These are the Firawns of today: the criminals of the modern era. About 5,000 years ago invaders of the Indus valley invented a religious caste system that still creates misery for millions. People can never be considered of equal worth in a caste ridden society where the principle is ascending reverence and descending contempt. The caste system in the Indian sub-continent is based on involuntary submission perpetuated by social pressures that defines some people as unworthy by their very status at birth. See verses 2:8-27. Also see verse 2:11.

[663] **God** is preparing Moses for a revolution against an oppressor. Anyone who is willing to sacrifice a lower value for a higher value, the good for the great, the life yet to come, is a force to be reckoned with. Opposition, it is said, should be individual in character. It should take ten thousand or a million forms until it becomes a tsunami that overwhelms the enemy: the unjust and oppressive rulers and operators of the modern world. See verses and footnotes 3:158; 4:74-78.

[28:11] She said to his sister, "Follow him." She watched him from afar, while they did not see her.
[28:12] We averted him from accepting all the nursing mothers. His sister then said to Firawn's wife, "I can show you a family who in their ways can raise him for you and take good care of him."
[28:13] Thus, We restored him to his mother in order to please her, remove her worries and to let her know that God's promise is the truth. However, most people do not know.
[28:14] When he reached full maturity and was strong We endowed him with wisdom and knowledge. We thus reward the righteous.

MOSES KILLS & BECOMES A FUGITIVE

[28:15] Once he entered the city unexpectedly, without being recognised by any people. He found two men fighting. One was a Hebrew from his tribe and the other was a Misrian, from his enemies. The one from his tribe called on him for help against his enemy. Moses punched the Misrian, killing him. Repenting, he said, "This is the work of my evil Self; it is the real enemy that profoundly misleads."[664]
[28:16] Moses implored, "My Sustainer, I have wronged my Self. Please protect me," and God protected him. He is the Protector and the Most Merciful.[665]
[28:17] He said, "My Sustainer, with Your blessings upon me, I will never be a supporter of the guilty ones."

[28:18] In the morning, he was again in the city, afraid and watchful. The one who sought his help yesterday, asked for his help again. Moses said to him, "You are the one who is really the troublemaker."
[28:19] As Moses attempted to strike their common enemy, the Misrian said, "O Moses, do you want to kill me, as you killed the other man yesterday? It seems you wish to be a tormenter on earth. You do not wish to be righteous."

[28:20] A man came running from the fringes of the city, saying, "O Moses, some people are plotting to kill you. You better leave immediately. I am giving you good advice."
[28:21] He fled the city, afraid and watchful. He said, "My Sustainer, save me from the oppressive people."

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[664] **This incident** took place in Misr, the trade station where Firawn was powerful and Moses' tribe was oppressed. See verses and footnotes 2:61; 12:111; 43:51.
[665] **Protect**. (Arabic: *ghafur.* Root GH'F'R*).* This is the protection that people supplicate to God for and indeed a protection that is given by Him to those who follow His guidance. See verses and footnotes 2:52; 2:58.

MOSES ARRIVES IN MIDYAN

[28:22] As he travelled towards Midyan, he said, "May my Sustainer guide me in the right path."

[28:23] When he reached a water well in Midyan, he found a crowd of people at the well and noticed two women waiting on the side. He said, "What is it that you need?" They said, "We are not able to get any water until the crowd disperses. We came as our father is an old man."

[28:24] He brought water for them then turned to the shade, saying, "My Sustainer, whatever provisions you provide for me, I am in dire need."

[28:25] Soon one of the two women approached him, shyly, and said, "My father invites you so he can repay you for getting the water for us." When Moses met him and told him his story, he said, "Have no fear. You have been saved from the oppressive people."

MOSES GET'S MARRIED AND IS APPOINTED MESSENGER

[28:26] One of the two women said, "O my father, hire him. He is the best one to hire, for he is strong and honest."[666]

[28:27] He said, "I wish to offer one of my two daughters for you to marry, in return for working for me for eight challenging years; if you make it ten years, it will be voluntary on your part. I do not wish to make this matter too difficult for you. You will find me, God willing, just."

[28:28] Moses said, "It is an agreement between me and you. Whichever period I fulfil, you will not be averse to either one. God is the guarantor of what we agree."

[28:29] When he had fulfilled his obligation, he travelled with his family. He saw a fire on the slope of a mount. He said to his family, "Stay here. I have seen a fire. Maybe I can bring to you some news or some of the fire to warm you."

[28:30] When he reached it, he was called from the edge of the right side of the valley, from the place where a bush was burning: "O Moses, it is I, the One God: Sustainer of the universe.

[28:31] "Throw down your staff." When he saw it moving like a serpent, he turned around to flee. "O Moses, come back; do not be afraid. You are perfectly safe.

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[666] **This young woman** has obviously taken a liking to Moses and recommends him to her father, who understood his daughter's intention and offers her hand in marriage. From this verse and preceding verses it is clear that women may freely speak to men, meet and choose their husbands and their consent is crucial to a marriage. Murders (termed as honour killings) of women who wish to marry a man of their choice are against Quranic principles. Muslim women are not veiled, this is why God can say [verse 33:52] that certain women are forbidden for marriage, even if you admire their beauty. If a man cannot see a woman's face, then how can he admire her beauty? See verses and footnote to 33:52-53.

[28:32] "Put your hand under your wing and it will come out bright without a blemish. Fold your arms and be calm from your fear. These are two signs from your Sustainer to be shown to Firawn and his elders; they are corrupt and wicked people."
[28:33] He said, "My Sustainer, I killed one of them and I fear lest they kill me.
[28:34] "Also, my brother Aaron is more eloquent than me. Send him with me as a helper to confirm and strengthen me. I fear lest they disbelieve me."
[28:35] He said, "We will strengthen you with your brother and We will provide you both with manifest authority. Thus, they will not be able to touch either one of you. With Our signs, the two of you, together with those who follow you, will be victorious."

FIRAWN: ASSERTS HIS AUTHORITY

[28:36] When Moses went to them with Our signs, clear and profound, they said, "This is fabricated magic. We have never heard of this even from our ancestors."
[28:37] Moses said, "My Sustainer knows best who brought the guidance from Him and who will be the ultimate victors. Surely, the transgressors never succeed."
[28:38] Firawn said, "O you elders, I do not know of any authority for you other than me. Therefore, kindle for me a fire, O Haman, in order to build a tower, that I may take a look at this god of Moses. I am sure that he is a liar."
[28:39] Thus, he and his arrogant cohorts continued to commit corruption on earth, without any right and thought that they would not be returned to Us.
[28:40] Consequently, We punished him and his troops by drowning them in the water. Note the consequences for those who transgress the limits of this guidance.
[28:41] We made them leaders who led their people to hell. Furthermore, on the Day of Accountability they will have no help.
[28:42] They incurred in this life condemnation and on the Day of Resurrection they will be despised.

[28:43] We gave Moses the guidance, after having annihilated the previous generations, and after setting many examples through them to provide enlightenment for the people and guidance and mercy, that they may take heed.
[28:44] You were not present on the slope of the western mount when We issued the command to Moses, you were not a witness.[667]
[28:45] But We established many generations who spent many years of their lives there. And you were not among the people of Midyan, teaching Our guidance to them. But We did send messengers to them.

[667] **Some events** only God bears witness. See verses 4:79; 63:1.

NO MESSENGER TO THE ARABS BEFORE MUHAMMAD

[28:46] Nor were you on the slope of the mount when We called Moses. But this is mercy from your Sustainer, towards all the people in order to warn those who received no warner before you, that they may take heed.[668]

THE QURAN: BEST GUIDANCE

[28:47] Thus, they cannot say, when a disaster strikes them as a consequence of their own deeds, "Our Sustainer, had You sent a messenger to us, we would have followed Your guidance and would have been believers."

[28:48] Now that the truth has come to them from Us, they say, "If only we could be given what was given to Moses." Did they not disbelieve in what was given to Moses in the past? They say, "Both scriptures are works of sorcery that imitate one another." They also say, "We reject both of them."

[28:49] Say: "If you are truthful then show me a book from God that provides better guidance than either of the two and I will follow it."

[28:50] If they fail to respond to you, then know that they follow only their own opinions. Who is farther astray than those who follow their own opinions, without guidance from God? Consistent with God's ordinance, such corrupt people are not guided.[669]

[28:51] We have delivered the message to them, that they may take heed.

[28:52] Those who have sense of morality and are exalted with knowledge will believe in this.

[28:53] When it is given to them, they will say, "We believe that this is the truth from the One who sustains us. We have been according to it muslims; submitters.[670]

[28:54] To these We grant twice the reward, because they steadfastly persevere. They counter evil works with good works and from Our provisions to them they spend for the good of social welfare.[671]

[28:55] When they come across vain talk, they disregard it and say, "We are responsible for our deeds and you are responsible for your deeds. Salamun

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[668] **The Arab** nation were not sent a messenger before Muhammad. See verse and footnote 34:44.

[669] **The Taurah** given to Moses (not the Old Testament) and The Quran are both sources of guidance from God. The Quran now encompasses and supersedes all previous revelation. See verse 11:17.

[670] **Conscientious** people, even if they are not known as *muslims,* recognise the values given in this Quran and have exalted characters consistent with these values even before the guidance is known to them. They may in fact be *muslims* - whether they are called *muslims* or not. See verses and footnotes 3:199; 12:56-57; 22:78; 36:20-32; 40:28-35; 49:14; 66:5.

[671] **Tolerance** and understanding is advocated at all times by God. A good example is the best weapon against evil and corrupt people. By applying this guidance individuals can excel in being good examples. See verse 16:125. **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for everyone. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verses and footnotes 2:215; 21:112.

Alaikum: Peace be upon you. We do not wish to behave like those who are ignorant.[672]

GOD'S MESSENGER CANNOT GUIDE

[28:56] You may not be able to guide even the ones you love. God is the only One who guides in accordance with His ordinance. And consistent with His ordinance there are those who attract His guidance.[673]

[28:57] They said, "If we follow your guidance, we may suffer persecution." Are We not able to establish for them a secure place in which all kinds of provisions are available? Indeed, most of them do not know.

[28:58] Many a community We annihilated for turning unappreciative of their lives. Consequently, here are their homes, nothing but uninhabited ruins after them, except a few. We are the inheritors.

[28:59] For your Sustainer never annihilates any community without sending a messenger in their midst to teach Our guidance to them. We never annihilate any community unless its people are wicked and corrupt.

[28:60] All things that are given to you are only the temporarily materials of this life and its vanity. What is with God is far better and everlasting. Do you not understand?

[28:61] Is the one to whom We promised a good pledge that will surely come to pass, equal to the one whom We provide with temporary materials of this life, then suffers eternal ruin on the Day of Resurrection?

DISBELIEVERS DISOWN THEIR MASTERS

[28:62] The day will come when He calls upon them, saying, "Where are those authorities you had set up to equal Me?"

[28:63] Those who incur the judgment will say, "Our Sustainer, these are the ones we misled; we misled them only because we ourselves had gone astray. We are innocent of their accusations. They were not really serving us."

[28:64] It will be said, "Call upon the authorities you set up to rival God." They will call upon them, but there will be no response. They will suffer the retribution and wish that they were guided.

[28:65] On that day, God will ask everyone, "How did you act in response to the messengers?"

[28:66] They will be so stunned by the facts on that day, they will be speechless.

[28:67] As for those who repent, believe in this guidance and lead a righteous life, they will be with those who prosper.

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[672] **Peace be upon you:** (Arabic: *salamun alaikum*). Greeting approved by God. See verse and footnote 6:54.

[673] **Guidance** comes from God, not the messengers. Individuals seek the truth and this ignites the guiding torch within themselves. All according to God's ordinance. The role of the messengers is to deliver the message and act as guiding examples. Abraham could not guide his father and nor could Noah guide his son. See verses 18:110 & 5:99-110. See also 11:45-47; 60:4.

[28:68] Your Sustainer is the One who creates whatever He wills and designates its conclusion; no one can manipulate God's ordinance. Glory be to God, the Most Exalted. He is far above needing any partner in His domain.
[28:69] Your sustainer knows your innermost thoughts that are hidden in your hearts, as well as everything you declare.
[28:70] He is the One God, there is no other authority to rank with Him. To Him belongs all honour in this first life and in the life yet to come. All judgment belongs with Him and to Him you will be returned.

GOD'S ORDINANCE - HIS MERCY

[28:71] Say: "What if God made the night perpetual until the Day of Resurrection? Which power, other than God, can provide you with light? Do you not hear?"
[28:72] Say: "What if God made the daylight perpetual until the Day of Resurrection? Which power, other than God, can provide you with a night for your rest? Do you not see?"
[28:73] It is a mercy from Him that He created for you the night and the day in order to rest during the night then seek His provisions during the day, that you may be appreciative.

FABRICATED AUTHORITIES ABANDON THEIR FOLLOWERS

[28:74] The day will come when He asks them, "Where are the authorities you had fabricated to rank with Me?"
[28:75] We will select from every community a witness, then say, "Present your proof." They will realise then that all truth belongs with God, while the authorities they fabricate will abandon them.[674]

QAROON: HIS POWER AND DEMISE

[28:76] Qaroon was one of Moses' people who betrayed them and oppressed them. We gave him so many treasures that the keys for it were almost too heavy for any one of his strongest slaves. His people said to him, "Do not be so arrogant. God does not care for those who are arrogant.[675]
[28:77] "Use the provisions bestowed upon you by God to seek the abode of the Hereafter, without neglecting your share in this world. Be good to others, as God has been generous towards you. Do not continue with your corruption on earth. God does not care for the corruptors."
[28:78] He said, "I attained all this because of my own ingenuity." Did he not realise that God had annihilated before him generations that were

[674] **Witness:** a person who sees an event, typically a crime or accident, take place. Such witnesses will testify on the Day of Accountability. See verses 4:41; 16:89.
[675] **Qaroon** represents the corruptions and exploitations of the capitalist system. Firawn is representative of all corrupt political powers. Likewise, Haman represents the priesthood. See verse and footnote 26:29.

much stronger and more astute than he, and greater in number? The annihilated transgressors were not asked about their crimes.[676]
[28:79] One day, he came out to his people in full splendour. Those who preferred this worldly life said, "Oh, we wish that we possessed what Qaroon has attained. Indeed, he is very fortunate."
[28:80] As for those who were wise and sensible, they said, "Pity on you, God's recompense is far better for those who believe and lead a righteous life. None attains it except the steadfast."
[28:81] We then caused the earth to swallow Qaroon and his mansion. No army could have helped him against God. Nothing could have saved him from his own destruction.
[28:82] Those who were envious of him the day before said, "Now we realise that God is the One who provides for whomever He chooses from among His servants and withholds it from whomever He wills, according to His ordinance. If it were not for God's grace towards us, He could have caused the earth to swallow us too. We now realise that the disbelievers never succeed."[677]

BELIEVERS: THE ULTIMATE WINNERS

[28:83] We reserve the abode of the Hereafter for those who seek neither approval or corruption on earth. The ultimate victory belongs to the righteous.
[28:84] Whoever works righteousness receives a far better reward. As for those who commit corruption, the retribution for their wrongdoing is precisely equivalent to their works.
[28:85] Surely, the One who decreed the Quran as a guiding law for you will summon you to a predetermined appointment. Say: "My sustainer is fully aware of those who uphold this guidance and those who have gone astray."
[28:86] You never expected this guidance to come your way, but this is a mercy from the One who sustains you. Therefore, you shall not be a helper of the disbelievers: those who reject this guidance.
[28:87] Nor shall you be diverted from God's guidance, after it has come to you and you shall invite others to your sustainer. And do not ever be diverted by any authorities who rival God.
[28:88] You shall not serve any authority to rank with God. There is no other authority to equal Him. Everything perishes except His presence. To Him belongs all sovereignty and to Him you will be returned.

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[676] **The guilty** need not be asked about their crimes. Justice is automatic and takes place as a consequence of their actions. **The Law of Requital.** See footnote to verse 49:18.

[677] **Do not be impressed** by the apparent success of people whether financial or social. Delusions of grandeur and people wanting to believe and behave like those around them are both aptly illustrated by Hans Christian Anderson in his well known story 'The Emperor's New Clothes'. Individuals prove successful because of their sincerity and good deeds, which always prevails. See verses and footnotes 9:34; 9:55; 3:196; 40:4; 54:5. See also verses 2:15; 20:121.

Sura 29: The Spider (Al-Ankaboot)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[29:1] A. L. M.
[29:2] Do people think that they will be left to say, "We believe," without being put to the test?
[29:3] We have tested those before them, for God will distinguish through His ordinance those who have developed with the truth and those who have exposed themselves as lacking in conviction.
[29:4] Do those who do wrong think that they can ever deceive Us? Mistaken indeed is their conclusion.
[29:5] Anyone hoping to meet God should know that such a meeting with God will most assuredly come to pass. He is the Hearer, aware of all things.
[29:6] Those who struggle, strive for their own good. God is in no need of anyone.[678]
[29:7] Those who believe and lead a righteous life, We will certainly remit their wrongs and will certainly reward them generously for their righteous works.

YOU SHALL HONOUR YOUR PARENTS

[29:8] We decreed the human being to honour his parents. But if they strive to induce you to serve other authorities as equals with Me, do not follow them. To Me is your ultimate return, then I will inform you of everything you have done.
[29:9] Those who believe and do good works, We will certainly admit them with the righteous.

DISBELIEVERS BLAME GOD

[29:10] Among the people there are those who say, "We believe in God," but as soon as they suffer any hardship, they attribute it to God, they consign people's persecution as God's retribution. But if, through God's ordinance good things come their way, they say, "We were with you." Is God not fully aware of these people's innermost thoughts?[679]

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[678] **This world** is a matrix for developing our Self in preparation for the life yet to come. The tests are there to forge our personalities to be fit to enter the future ahead. See verse 90:4.

[679] **Fear and turmoil** is the consequence of not following God's guidance. When people suffer they easily blame God or disbelieve in Him. They never appear to think that their rejecting proper guidance may have something to do with the fear and turmoil in the world. Powerful nations who wanting to dominate and control the world's resources wage wars (and pre-emptive wars) on weaker nations, greedy multi-national businesses put profit before people, manufacturers pollute the environment and even individuals do not do enough to bring attention to the injustices and possibly preventing many disasters that cause illness, hardship, displacement and suffering to the most vulnerable. Everything happens by God's ordinance and He has provided the solution to bring about that change: the Absolute Laws and Permanent Values in the Quran. Someone has to take on the task: if not you, then who? See verses and footnote 2:2; 8:25.

[29:11] God will most certainly distinguish those who believe and He will most certainly expose the hypocrites.
[29:12] Those who disbelieved said to those who believed, "If you follow our way, we will be responsible for your sins." There is no truth in this; they cannot bear the wrongs of anyone else. They are liars.
[29:13] In fact, they will carry their own corruption, in addition to loads of other people's wrongs for which they were responsible. Most certainly, they will be asked on the Day of Resurrection about their false claims.

NOAH & ABRAHAM

[29:14] We sent Noah to his people and he stayed with them one thousand years, less fifty. Subsequently, they incurred the deluge because of their transgressions.[680]
[29:15] We saved him and those who accompanied him in the boat and We set it up as a lesson for all the people.
[29:16] Abraham said to his people, "You shall serve God and reverence Him. This is better for you, if you only knew.
[29:17] "Who you serve instead of serving God are powerless authorities. You have invented a lie and the idols you worship instead of serving God do not possess any provisions for you. Therefore, you shall seek provisions only from God. You shall serve Him alone and be appreciative of Him; to Him is your ultimate return."
[29:18] If you disbelieve in this guidance, generations before you have also disbelieved. The sole function of the messenger is to deliver the complete clear message.

STUDY NATURAL HISTORY

[29:19] Have they not seen how God initiates the creation, then repeats it? This is easy for God to do.
[29:20] Say: "Travel the earth and discover the origins of life." For God will thus initiate the creation in the next life. God is All-powerful.
[29:21] He condemns to retribution according to His ordinance and showers His mercy upon whomever He wills, according to His ordinance. Ultimately to Him you will be returned.

[680] **How old was Noah** when he died? According to the Quran he was 950 old years and this seems an unusually long period. So is it possible for a man to live that long? People born in the 1800s, when life expectancy was barely around 35, have been recorded to live more than three and a half times this age. So for anyone to live more than 900 years would mean that their environment and other health factors would need to be exceptional. We know for a fact that materials such as fossils are found in a better condition than others depending on the environment they have been preserved in, so there is no reason to discount that extraordinary conditions may not have allowed Noah to live for an unusual length of time.

[29:22] There is no escape from these facts, on earth or in the heavens and you have none beside God as a sustainer and helper.
[29:23] Those who disbelieve in God's guidance and in meeting Him, have despaired from My mercy. They have incurred a painful retribution.

MALAIKA VISIT ABRAHAM AND LOT

[29:24] The only response from his people was their saying, "Kill him or burn him." But God saved him from the fire. This should provide lessons for people who believe.
[29:25] Abraham said, "You serve beside God powerless people as authorities to rank with God, just to preserve social acceptance and maintain some friendship among them in this worldly life. But then, on the Day of Resurrection, you will disown one another and curse one another. Your conclusion is a hell of your own making, wherein you cannot help one another."
[29:26] Lot believed with him and said, "I am taking the challenge of my sustainer. He is the Almighty, the Most Wise."
[29:27] We granted him Isaac and Jacob, We assigned his descendants as envoys and gave them the guidance, We endowed him with his due recompense in this life and in the Hereafter he will surely be with the righteous.
[29:28] Lot said to his people, "You commit such vulgar excess, no one in the world has ever done this before.
[29:29] "Your men practice sex with men, you commit abduction and you allow all kinds of vice in your society." The only response from his people was to say, "Bring on to us God's retribution, if you are truthful."[681]
[29:30] He said, "My sustainer, grant me victory over these wicked people."
[29:31] When Our messengers went to Abraham with good news about Isaac's birth, they also said, "We are on our way to annihilate the people of a town because they have been most wicked."
[29:32] He said, "But Lot is living there." They said, "We are fully aware of everyone who lives in it. We will save him and his family, except his wife: she is doomed."
[29:33] When Our messengers arrived at Lot's place, they were mistreated and he was embarrassed in their presence. But they said, "Have no fear and do not worry. We will save you and your family, except your wife. She is condemned.
[29:34] "We will pour upon the people of this town, a disaster from the sky, as a consequence of their wickedness."
[29:35] We left standing some of their ruins, to serve as a profound lesson for people who understand.

[681] **Sodomy** forbidden. See verses 7:80-84; 11:77-82; 26:160-175; 27:55.

GOD'S IMMUTABLE SYSTEM: THE CORRUPT ARE DESTROYED

[29:36] To Midyan We sent their brother Shu'aib. He said, "O my people, you shall serve God and prepare for the life yet to come and do not ruin the earth with corruption."

[29:37] They disbelieved him and consequently, the earthquake annihilated them and they were left dead in their homes by morning.

[29:38] Similarly, Aad and Thamoud were annihilated. This is made manifest to you through their ruins. To them their evil works seemed good and diverted them from the path, even though they had eyes to see.

[29:39] Also reflect on Qaroon, Firawn and Haman: Moses went to them with clear signs. But they continued to commit tyranny on earth. Consequently, they could not evade the retribution.[682]

[29:40] All those disbelievers were doomed as a consequence of their wrongdoings. Some of them We annihilated by violent winds, some were annihilated by an earthquake, some We caused the earth to swallow and some We drowned. God is not the one who wronged them. It is they who wronged their own Self.

THE SPIDER'S WEB IS FRAGILE AND UNSAFE

[29:41] The example of those who accept other protectors to rank with God is that of the spider's system, and the flimsiest of all homes is that of a spider system, if they only knew.

[29:42] God knows full well that whatever they serve besides Him are really nothing. He is the Almighty, the Most Wise.

[29:43] We cite these examples for all the people and none appreciate them except the knowledgeable.[683]

[29:44] God created the heavens and the earth, truthfully. This provides sufficient proof for the believers.

OBSERVE YOUR COMMITMENTS

[29:45] You shall recite to remind yourself what is revealed to you of this guidance and observe your commitments, for fulfilling your obligations restrains you from evil and vice. And remembering God's greatness is salient in appreciating His mercy. God knows everything you do.[684]

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[682] **Qaroon, Firawn and Haman** represent: capitalism, dictatorship and priesthood. See verse and footnote 26:29.

[683] **A knowledgeable** person knows that the nature (the system) of the Black Widow spider is that she kills her mate after copulation, this is in addition to the fact that the spider's web is very frail. So for both reasons the analogy of accepting protection from other than God can be dangerous is quite fitting. Therefore it is unsafe to seek protection from anyone other than God.

[684] **Remembering** God's greatness: (Arabic: *zikrullahi-akbar*). See verse and footnote 6:19; 50:45.

[29:46] Do not argue with people who share this guidance except in the nicest possible manner, unless they transgress, then say, "We believe in the guidance revealed to us and in the guidance revealed to you, and our God and your God is one and the same; to Him we are submitters."[685]
[29:47] We have revealed to you this guidance and those whom We blessed with the previous guidance will believe in it. Also, some of your people will believe in it. Indeed, those who disregard Our guidance are the real disbelievers and rejecters.
[29:48] You did not learn the previous scriptures neither did you write them with your hand. In that case, the rejecters would have had reason to harbour doubts.
[29:49] In fact, these revelations are clear in the hearts of those who possess knowledge. Only the wicked will disregard Our guidance.
[29:50] They said, "If only miracles could come down to him from his Sustainer." Say: "All signs come only from God. I am no more than a manifest warner."
[29:51] Is it not enough that We revealed to you this book, a profound guidance to set you in the right path? This is indeed a mercy and a reminder for people who believe.
[29:52] Say: "God suffices as a witness between me and you. He knows everything in the heavens and the earth. Surely, those who believe in falsehood and disbelieve in God are the real losers."

[29:53] They challenge you to bring the punishment. If it were not for a time predetermined according to His ordinance, the retribution would have come to them immediately. Certainly, to them it will seem to come suddenly, when they least expect it.
[29:54] They challenge you to bring retribution. A hell of their own making already surrounds those who reject this guidance.[686]
[29:55] The day will come when the retribution overwhelms them, from above them and from beneath their feet, He will say, "Taste the consequences of your works."
[29:56] O My servants who believe in this guidance, My earth is spacious, so serve Me alone.
[29:57] Every Self will taste death, then to Us you will be ultimately returned.

[685] **Tolerance** in spreading this guidance is paramount. See verse and footnote 16:125.
[686] **Suffering,** torment, fear and turmoil is already around us. Corruption and evil at all levels is a fact of life. A hell on earth. This is the result of not following the System, Deen-Islam, the social order to bring peace in place of turmoil and security in place of fear.

[29:58] Those who believe and lead a righteous life, We will surely settle them in harmony, with mansions and flowing streams. Eternally they abide therein. What a beautiful reward for those who do good.
[29:59] They are the ones who steadfastly persevere and trust in their Sustainer.
[29:60] Many a creature that does not carry its provisions, God provides for it, as well as for you. He is the Hearer and aware of all things.

ACTIONS BELIE WHAT MANY PEOPLE PROFESS

[29:61] If you ask them, "Who created the heavens and the earth and put the sun and the moon in your service," they will say, "God." Why then do they deviate?[687]
[29:62] God is the One who increases the provision for whomever He chooses from among His creatures and withholds it. God is fully aware of all things.
[29:63] If you ask them, "Who sends down from the sky water, to revive dead land," they will say, "God." Say: "Praise God." Most of them do not understand.

THE REAL LIFE YET TO COME

[29:64] This worldly life is no more than vanity and play, while the abode of the Hereafter is the real life, if they only knew.
[29:65] When they sail on a ship, they implore God, promising their devotion to His Deen-Islam. But as soon as He saves them to the shore, they revert to setting up authorities to rank with Him.[688]
[29:66] Let them disbelieve in what We have given them and let them enjoy temporarily, they will surely find out.
[29:67] Have they not seen that We have established peace and harmony in the sanctions of the System, while all around them people are in constant danger? Would they still believe in falsehood and reject God's blessings?[689]
[29:68] Who is more evil than one who fabricates lies and attributes them to God or rejects the truth when it comes to him? Is hell not a just retribution for those who reject this guidance?
[29:69] As for those who strive in Our cause, We will surely guide them in Our path. Most assuredly, God is with those who do good.

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[687] **Those who** profess to believe in the One God can actually be mushrik. See verse: 12:106.
[688] **They implore God** in times of need. See verse and footnote 10:12.
[689] **The sanctions** refer to the restrictions and measures imposed by God and His decrees as part of His system. It is the permanent laws that give freedom and as a consequence create perfect harmony for those in the System: Deen-Islam.

Sura 30: The Romans (Al-Roum)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[30:1] A. L. M.
[30:2] Certainly, the Romans will be defeated,
[30:3] in the nearest land. After their defeat, they will rise again and be successful,
[30:4] within several years. Such is God's ordinance, both in the first promise and the second. On that day the believers shall rejoice
[30:5] in God's victory. He grants victory according to His ordinance. He is the Almighty, Most Merciful.
[30:6] Such is God's promise and God never breaks His promise, but most people do not know.

THE MAJORITY: SKEWED FOCUS AND WRONG VALUES

[30:7] They care only about things of this world that they can see, while being totally oblivious to the continuous future and the life yet to come.
[30:8] Why do they not reflect on themselves? God did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them, except for a specific purpose and for a specific life span. However, most people with regard to meeting their Sustainer are disbelievers.
[30:9] Have they not travelled the earth and seen the consequences? Those who preceded you, the flourishing communities, invigorated the earth and gave it life more than you. They were more powerful, more prosperous and more productive on earth and the messengers went to them with clear signs. Afterwards they deviated. God is not the One who wronged them, they are the ones who wronged their own Self.[690]
[30:10] The consequences for those who commit evil has to be destruction. That is because they reject God's guidance and ridicule it.

DISBELIEVERS ABANDON THEIR MASTERS

[30:11] God is the One who initiates the creation and repeats it. Ultimately, you will be returned to Him.
[30:12] On the Day when the Hour comes to pass, the guilty will be shocked.
[30:13] Their false authorities will have no power to intercede on their behalf, on the contrary, they will disown authorities they fabricated to rival or equal God.
[30:14] On the day when the End comes to pass, they will part company.

[690] **To give Life:** to prosper, invigorate, give life, sustain, cultivate or flourish (Arabic: *Amr* root M'R). See verse and footnote 9:18.

[30:15] As for those who believe in this guidance and lead a righteous life, they will be in harmony, celebrating.
[30:16] As for those who disbelieve and reject Our revelations and the meeting of the Hereafter, they will last in the retribution forever.
[30:17] Therefore, you shall exalt God when you retire at night and when you rise in the morning.
[30:18] All praise is due to Him in the heavens and the earth, throughout the evening, as well as in the middle of your day.
[30:19] He produces the living from the dead and produces the dead from the living, and He revives the land after it had died. You are similarly resurrected.

[30:20] Among His signs is that He initiated you from clay, then you multiplied as human beings.[691]
[30:21] Among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves, in order to have peace and contentment with each other and He placed in your hearts love and care towards your spouses. In this, there are sufficient signs for people who think.
[30:22] Among His signs are the creation of the heavens and the earth and the variations in your languages and your colours. In these, there are signs for those who have knowledge.
[30:23] Among His proofs is your sleeping during the night or the day and your working in pursuit of His provisions. In this, there are sufficient signs for people who can hear.
[30:24] Among His signs is that He shows you the lightning as a source of fear as well as hope, then He sends down from the sky water to revive a land that has been dead. In these, there are sufficient signs for people who understand.
[30:25] Among His proofs are that the heavens and the earth are standing at His disposal. Finally, when He calls you out of the earth, one call and you will immediately come out.
[30:26] To Him belongs everyone in the heavens and the earth, all are subservient to Him.
[30:27] And He is the One who initiates the creation, then repeats it; this is ever easy for Him. To Him belongs the most sublime similitudes in the heavens and the earth and He is the Almighty, Most Wise.

SETTING UP AUTHORITIES TO EQUAL GOD IS IRRATIONAL

[30:28] He cites for you herein an example from among yourselves: Do you ever elevate your servants or subordinates to the level where they rank

[691] **All life on earth** emerged from clay. See verse and footnote 36:82.

with you, and to the point that you pay them as much allegiance as is being paid to you? We thus explain the revelations for people who understand.
[30:29] Indeed, the transgressors have followed their own opinions, without knowledge. Who then can guide those who have gone astray, in accordance with God's ordinance? No one can ever help them.
[30:30] Therefore, you shall dedicate your purpose to the Deen-Islam, the social order with unchanging principles. This is the emergent instinct placed in people by God. Such is the consistent way God creates and directs; a way that does not change. This is the perfect deen but most people do not know.[692]

SPLITTING INTO SECTS FORBIDDEN

[30:31] You shall follow God's revealed guidance and keep your duty to Him, observe your commitments and do not surrender into following any authorities that are set up to rank with him.
[30:32] Do not be like those who divide this Deen-Islam into sects, each party rejoicing with what they have.[693]

[30:33] When adversity afflicts some people, they turn to their Sustainer, totally devoting themselves to Him. But then, as soon as He bestows them with His mercy, some of them revert to serving authorities to rival or equal Him.[694]
[30:34] Let them be unappreciative of what We have given them. Enjoy temporarily, you will surely find out.
[30:35] Have We given them permission that justifies their setting up of authorities to equal or rival God?
[30:36] When We bestow mercy upon any people, they rejoice therein. But when adversity befalls them, as a consequence of their own works, they become despondent.
[30:37] Do they not realise that God increases or reduces any provision for whomever according to His ordinance? These should be lessons for people who believe.

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[692] **All human** beings have been imbued with a conscience - an instinctive knowledge about the basic rights and wrongs. They also have an intuitive awareness of accountability. **God's laws of creation** are consistent and have order and direction. He creates and directs according to His ordinance, not miracles, capricious or arbitrary suspension of laws. See verses 7:172; 19:21-26; 33:62; 36:82 and 5:3.
[693] **There is only one God's System:** Deen-Islam. To follow a different conflicting belief system is shirk: high treason, and is tantamount to following an authority to rival or equal God, an unforgivable offence. See verses and footnotes 2:105; 3:23-24; 9:1-10. See also verse 3:85. God's law's of creation do not change. See verses and footnotes 19:21-26. See also 33:62.
[694] **When in dire need** people ask God for help, when the pain is over, they forget and go back to serving other authorities to rank with God: this is shirk: high treason.

[30:38] Therefore, you shall give your relatives their rightful share, as well as the poor and the refugees. This is better for those who sincerely seek God's approval, they are the one who will prosper.
[30:39] The usury that is practiced to increase some people's wealth does not gain anything at God. But those who purify their actions, consistent with God's ordinance will be the ones who receive their reward manifold.[695]

CORRUPTION MEANS DISASTER

[30:40] God is the One who created you. He is the One who provides for you. He is the One who causes you to die. He is the One who resurrects you. Can any of the authorities you fabricate to rank with God do any of these things? Be He glorified. He is much too exalted to have any partners.
[30:41] Disasters have spread throughout the land and the sea because of the corruption and exploitation people have committed. He thus lets them taste the consequences of some of their works that they may return to do good.

HISTORY IS ABUNDANT WITH LESSONS

[30:42] Say: "Travel the world and note the consequences of those before you." Most of them followed authorities they fabricated to rival or equal God.
[30:43] Therefore, you shall devote yourself completely to this perfect System, before a day comes which is made inevitable by God. On that day, they will be shocked.
[30:44] Whoever disbelieves, disbelieves to the detriment of his own Self, while those who lead a righteous life of good work, do so to strengthen and develop their own Self.
[30:45] For He will generously recompense those who believe and lead a righteous life from His reward. He does not care for those who reject this guidance.
[30:46] Among His proofs is that He sends the winds with good signs, to bestow you with His mercy and to allow the ships to sail the seas in accordance with His ordinance and for you to seek His bounties through commerce that you may be appreciative.

THE BELIEVERS: THE ULTIMATE VICTORS

[30:47] We have sent messengers before you to their people, with profound signs. Subsequently, We punished those who transgressed. It is Our assurance that We grant victory to the believers who follow this guidance.
[30:48] God is the One who sends the winds to stir up clouds, to be spread throughout the sky in accordance with His will. He then piles the clouds up,

[695] **Usury:** economic oppression and profiteering. see verse and footnote 2:275.

then you see the rain coming down from them. When it falls according to His ordinance on many from among His servants, they rejoice.
[30:49] Before it fell on them, they had resorted to despair.
[30:50] You shall appreciate God's continuous mercy and how He revives the land that has been dead. He will just as certainly resurrect the dead. He is All-powerful.
[30:51] Even if we had sent upon them instead a yellow sandstorm, they would have continued to disbelieve.
[30:52] You cannot make the dead nor the deaf hear the call, once they turn away.
[30:53] Nor can you guide the blind out of their straying. You can only be heard by those who believe in Our revelations and decide to accept this guidance.

DISBELIEVERS OBLIVIOUS TO GUIDANCE

[30:54] God is the One who initiated you weak, then granted you after the weakness, strength; then substituted after the strength, weakness and grey hair. He creates according to His ordinance. He is aware of all things, the All-powerful.
[30:55] On the day when the End comes to pass, the guilty will swear that they lasted in this world only one hour. That is how wrong they will be.
[30:56] Those who are blessed with knowledge and conviction will say, "You have lasted, according to God's decree, until the Day of Resurrection. Now, this is the Day of Resurrection, but you failed to recognise it."
[30:57] Therefore, no apology on that day will benefit those who transgressed the limits of this guidance, nor will they be excused.
[30:58] Thus, We have cited for mankind in this Quran all kinds of examples. Yet, no matter what kind of proof you present to those who reject this guidance, they say, "You are falsifiers."[696]
[30:59] The hearts of those who prefer not to know better are thus sealed according to the ordinance of God.[697]
[30:60] Therefore, you shall steadfastly persevere, for God's promise is the truth and do not be irritated by those who have not attained certainty.

[696] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verse and footnote 2:185.
[697] **A person** can become impervious to guidance: when an individual rejects guidance, the character may go into a denial mode and receptive to other regressive ideas, eventually losing the ability to understand or defend the truth. See verses 2:6,7; 4:155; 6:25; 10:33.

Sura 31: Luqman (Luqman)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[31:1] A. L. M.
[31:2] These are the signs of this revelation: a book of judgement.
[31:3] A beacon and a mercy for the righteous.
[31:4] Who observe their commitments and keep them pure and with regards to the life yet to come they are absolutely certain.[698]
[31:5] They follow this guidance from their Sustainer and they are successful.
[31:6] Among the majority of people there are those who uphold profane hadith in contempt of the truth, and thus without knowledge mislead many from the path of God and make themselves doomed to failure. These have incurred a shameful retribution.[699]
[31:7] And when Our guidance is recited to any one of them, they turn away in arrogance as if they never heard it, as if their ears are deaf. Promise them a painful retribution.
[31:8] Surely, those who believe and lead a righteous life have deserved gardens of peace.
[31:9] Eternally they abide therein. This is the truthful promise of God. He is the Almighty, Most Wise.
[31:10] He created the heavens without visible pillars. He established on earth stabilising mountains lest it tumbles with you and He spread on it all kinds of creatures. We send down from the sky water to grow all kinds of beautiful plants.[700]
[31:11] Such is the creation of God; show me what the authorities you set up to rank with Him have created. Indeed, the transgressors are far astray.

LUQMAN'S ADVICE TO HIS SON

[31:12] We endowed Luqman with wisdom: "You shall be appreciative of God." Whoever is appreciative is thankful for his own good. As for those who turn ungrateful, God is in no need of anything and is worthy of all praise.
[31:13] Recall that Luqman said to his son, as he enlightened him, "My son, do not set up any authority to rank with God. Setting up authorities to rival or equal Him is a gross offence."

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[698] **The evolutionary** process is continuous and does not stop with death, the transition to the life yet to come. See verses and footnotes 27:3; 36:82; 90:4.
[699] **Hadith, a narration.** There are many vain and useless hadith wrongly attributed to the messenger of God. These have been written hundreds of years after the death of the messenger and contain profanities that tarnish the messenger and blatantly contradict the Quran. Following such hadith is detrimental as they divert people away from the real guidance. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 39:23; 68:37.
[700] **What holds up the sky?** See verse 13:2 and corresponding footnote.

[31:14] We decree the human being to honour his parents. His mother bore him after she got heavier as he grew inside her and it takes two years of maternal care, until weaning. You shall be appreciative of Me and of your parents. To Me is the ultimate return.
[31:15] If they strive to persuade you to accept any authority to rival or equal Me, do not follow them. But continue to treat them amicably. You shall follow only the path of those who have turned to Me. Ultimately, you all return to Me, then I will inform you of everything you have done.
[31:16] "My son, know that even something as tiny as a mustard seed, deep inside a rock, be it in the heavens or the earth, God will bring it out. God is sublime and aware of all things.
[31:17] "My son, you shall observe your commitments. You shall advocate righteousness and forbid evil and remain steadfast in the face of adversity. These are the most honourable qualities.[701]
[31:18] "You shall not treat people with arrogance nor shall you roam the earth to flaunt your wealth or status. God does not like the arrogant and proud.
[31:19] "Walk humbly and speak moderately, the ugliest voice is like that of a donkey."
[31:20] Do you not see that God has committed in your service everything in the heavens and the earth, and His blessings flow to you in exceeding measures, both obvious and hidden? Yet, some people argue about God without knowledge, without guidance and without this enlightening scripture. [702]

DISBELIEVERS THINK THEY ARE BELIEVERS

[31:21] When they are told, "Follow this guidance from God," they say, "No, we follow only what we found our parents doing." What if their Ego is leading them to the agony of hell?
[31:22] Those who follow God's guidance completely and consequently lead a righteous life have taken hold of the strongest bond. For God is in full control of all things.
[31:23] As for those who reject this, do not be saddened by their disbelief. To Us is their ultimate return then We will inform them of everything they had done. God is fully aware of their innermost thoughts.

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[701] **Why** do bad things happen to good people? See verse and footnote 8:25.
[702] **When God commanded** the malaika to 'concede' before Adam, it was to allow all energies, materials, invisible and visible to be harnessed and controlled by mankind. We now see that man now utilizes energy and resources using them for great benefit, yet without recognising the One God who gave them this power. See verses and footnotes 2:34; 7:11; 15:29; 18:50; 31:29; 38:74. **Opinions:** Most people base their belief not on knowledge or learning, but hearsay and conjecture are no substitutes for the truth. See verses and footnotes 10:36; 38:26.

[31:24] We let them enjoy temporarily then commit them to severe retribution.
[31:25] If you ask them, "Who created the heavens and the earth," they will say, "God." Say: "Praise be to God." Yet, most of them do not know.
[31:26] To God belongs everything in the heavens and the earth. God is the Most Prosperous and the Most Praiseworthy.[703]
[31:27] If all the trees on earth were made into pens and the ocean supplied the ink and added to this were seven more oceans, the words of God would not run out. God is Almighty, Most Wise.[704]
[31:28] The creation and resurrection of all of you is the same as that of one person. God is Hearer and Seer.
[31:29] Do you not realise that God merges the night into the day and merges the day into the night and that He has committed the sun and the moon in your service, each running resolutely in its orbit for a specific life span and that God is fully aware of everything you do?
[31:30] This shows that God is the truth while any authority they set up as equal or as rival to Him is falsehood, and that God is the Most High, Most Great.

[31:31] Do you not see that the ships roam the sea, carrying God's provisions, to show you some of His proofs? Indeed, these should be sufficient signs for all who are steadfast and appreciative.
[31:32] When violent waves surround them, they implore God, promising their devotion to His Deen-Islam. But as soon as He saves them to the shore, some of them revert back to their own ways. None reject Our revelations except those who betray and are unappreciative.[705]
[31:33] O people, you shall reverence your Sustainer and fear a day when a father cannot help his own child, nor can a child help his father. Certainly, God's promise is truth. Therefore, do not be distracted by this life; do not be distracted from God by mere impressions.
[31:34] With God is the knowledge regarding the End. He is the One who sends down the rain and He knows the contents of each and every womb. No Self knows what will happen to it tomorrow and no one knows in which land he or she will die. God is all Wise and aware of all things.

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[703] **Those who** profess to believe in the One God can actually be mushrik. See verse: 12:106.
[704] **This Quran** is the essence of the Permanent Values, leaving communities to establish their own by-laws within these decrees. Had God willed, he could have sent volumes of laws and edicts, covering all aspects of life: how to wash, dress, eat, sleep etc. in fact, rules and regulations in all things, but by His mercy He gave unchanging principles for changing times. “The more corrupt the state, the more numerous the laws”, as Tacitus said. Laws founded on a few sound and basic principles are far better than hefty legal tomes micro-managing people like a nanny state or worse, a police state. See verse 18:109.
[705] **They implore God** when in need, but forget His deen when the pain is gone. See verse and footnote 10:12.

Sura 32: The Submission (Al-Sajdah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[32:1] A. L. M.
[32:2] The book is without a doubt a revealed guidance from the Sustainer of the universe.
[32:3] They said, "He fabricated it." Indeed, this is the truth from your Sustainer that you may be guided to warn this community that never received a warner before you.[706]
[32:4] God is the One who created the heavens and the earth and everything between them in six periods, then assumed all authority. You have none beside Him as sustainer nor do you have an intercessor. Would you not then take heed?
[32:5] All matters are controlled by Him from the heavens to the earth, all processes of evolution that occur in an aeon may equal to many millennia of your calculation.
[32:6] Knower of all secrets and declarations; the Almighty, Most Merciful.

THE ORIGIN OF MAN: EVOLUTION OF LIFE FROM CLAY

[32:7] He is the One who perfected everything He created and initiated the life of mankind from clay.[707]
[32:8] Now He continues his reproduction through a certain modest fluid.
[32:9] He evolved you and directed you with His Ruh[708]. And He gave you the hearing, the eyesight and the insight. Rarely do you use them and rarely are you thankful.
[32:10] They wonder, "After we vanish into the earth, do we get created anew?" Thus, as regards meeting their Sustainer, they are disbelievers.

THE GUILTY BEFORE GOD

[32:11] Say: "You will be put to death by the malaika in whose charge you are placed, then to your Sustainer you will be returned."
[32:12] If only you could see the guilty when they lower their heads before their Sustainer: "Our Sustainer, now we have seen and we have heard. Send us back and we will be righteous. Now we have attained certainty."
[32:13] Had We willed, We could have given every Self its guidance, but it is already ordained that hell will be filled with many guilty people from the hidden and prominent ones.[709]

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[706] **The Arab** nation were not sent a messenger before Muhammad. See verse and footnote 34:44.
[707] **Human being from clay.** See verses and footnotes 3:59; 36:82.
[708] **Ruh** is the directive energy *from* God, but not *of* God. See verses and footnotes 4:171.
[709] **As he did with plants and animals,** God could have guided everyone by direction and instinct, but what value would that have? Individuals are bestowed with a measure of 'free will' that entitles them to develop their Self through choice rather than compulsion. See verses and footnotes 13:31; 16:68.

[32:14] Taste the consequences of your forgetting that you are accountable. We now disregard you as you disregarded Our guidance. You have incurred eternal punishment as a result of your own works.
[32:15] The only people who truly believe in Our revelations are those who when reminded of them, concede and glorify their Sustainer without any arrogance.
[32:16] They readily forsake their beds in order to serve their Sustainer, out of hope and their duty to Him, and from Our provisions to them they spend for the good of social welfare.[710]

HEAVEN: LIFE AND PLEASURES BEYOND DESCRIPTION

[32:17] You have no idea how much pleasure and happiness are waiting for you as a reward for your righteous works.[711]
[32:18] Is one who believes and follows this guidance the same as one who rejects it and is wicked? The two are not equal.
[32:19] As for those who believe and lead a righteous life, they have deserved the eternal paradise. Such is their abode in return for their works.
[32:20] As for the wicked and corrupt, their end is a hell of their own making. Every time they try to progress, they struggle because of their weakness. They will be told, "Taste the agony of hell which you used to deny."

Development of the Self: with adversity/ hardship 94:3-8. only those distinguished deserve a state of harmony 3:142. the testing path 90:10-20. Evolve from form to another 23:14; 84:19. Weak Self struggles 32:12. World a matrix for development 21:111. Underdeveloped Self will suffer 101:8. Good works strengthen the Self 30:44. Tests of adversity to develop Self 6:42. Lifespan/ time to develop Self 6:128. Self departs undeveloped 9:85. People exalt themselves/ God exalts you 4:92. Mature Self progresses/ weak Self struggles 23:102-103. Everyone will judge what regressed/progresses them 75:14. All good sent ahead/ loan to God 73:20.

[710] **Good works** show respect to God and those active in His service rise early to get full benefit from each day and use it to its best advantage. They are motivated by their good works and the energy they attract from healthy living. Willingly following and implementing His guidance, for the ultimate good of our own Self, is the best way to glorify God. See verses 10:15; 21:20; 27:62; 35:39; 36:82.

[711] **When in a womb,** unborn individuals are unable to understand the pleasures and fascinating experiences of this world. In the same way, we cannot understand the life yet to come. A growing foetus has no control over its progress: many things such as the mother's lifestyle and environment determine the child's condition at birth, but in this world we have some control over diet, exercise, education to determine our future. Furthermore we have total control over our moral choices that influence the development of our Self, that survives death and moves on to the next life, where we thrive and progress (heaven) or struggle under the torment of our conscience, when we look back at the lost opportunities (hell). See verses 7:53; 32:12, 32:28-30. **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verses and footnotes 2:215; 21:112.

[32:21] We let them taste the lesser punishments in this world, before they incur the greater retribution of the Hereafter, that they may take heed and reform.
[32:22] Who is more evil than one who is reminded of this revealed guidance of his Sustainer, then insists upon disregarding it? We will certainly punish the guilty, consistent with Our ordinance.
[32:23] We gave Moses the guidance: therefore do not harbour any doubt about meeting God: We made it a guide for the Children of Israel.
[32:24] We appointed from among them leaders who guided in accordance with Our commandments because they steadfastly persevered and attained certainty about Our guidance.
[32:25] Your Sustainer is the One who will judge them on the Day of Resurrection, regarding everything they disputed.
[32:26] Does it ever occur to them how many generations We annihilated before them? They now live and walk in their ancestors' homes. This should provide sufficient signs. Do they not hear?
[32:27] Do they not realise that We drive the water to barren lands and produce with it crops to feed their livestock as well as themselves? Do they not see?
[32:28] They challenge: "Where is that victory, if you are truthful?"
[32:29] Say: "The day such a victory comes, believing will not benefit those who did not believe before that nor will they be given another chance."[712]
[32:30] Therefore, disregard them and wait, they too are waiting.

[712] **Believing or repenting** while dying (contrition) is of no benefit as not only does the Self need time to repair any damage done, but it needs time to develop and gain strength. Only actions based on conscious moral choices strengthen the Self making it fit for the life yet to come. **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.

Sura 33: The Parties (Al-Ahzab)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[33:1] O messenger, you shall do your duty to God and do not give in to the hypocrites and those who reject this message. God is aware of all things, Most Wise.
[33:2] Follow what is revealed to you from your Sustainer. God is fully aware of everything you all do.
[33:3] And put your trust in God. God suffices as a supporter.

SERVICE TO GOD IS PRIORITY

[33:4] God did not give any man two hearts within his body. Nor did He make your wives whom you estrange, according to your own custom, into your mothers. Nor did He turn your adopted children into your natural progeny. All these are mere utterances that you have invented. God speaks the truth and He guides in the right path.[713]

ADOPTED CHILDREN - PRESERVE THEIR IDENTITY

[33:5] You shall give your adopted children names that preserve their relationship to their real parents. This is more equitable in the sight of God. If you do not know their parents, then as those who share your deen, you shall treat them as members of your family. You do not commit a wrong if you make a mistake in this respect. You are responsible for your purposeful intentions. God is the Protector and the Most Merciful.[714]

[33:6] The messenger is closer to the believers than they are to each other and his wives are like mothers to them. The relatives ought to take care of one another in accordance with God's guidance. Thus, the believers shall take care of their relatives who take up the challenge of this Deen-Islam,

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[713] **This verse** is a prime example of the precision with which the words in the Quran are chosen. The sentence states that "God did not give any *man* two hearts *within* his body." No *man* naturally has two hearts but a *woman* can have two or more hearts *within* her body, for example when in pregnancy. The other verse [22:46], when all people are mentioned, which includes men, women and children, the Quran says the hearts are *in their chests*, not body. **Estranged wife:** It was an Arab custom for a husband to estrange a wife by saying she was as his mother. Such an abhorrent custom is dispelled here.

[714] **Orphans,** some of the most vulnerable members of our society are given their due rights and people are commanded to be just and fair to them. The Quran decrees that their inheritance not be plundered and should be looked after until maturity when they become of age and are able to take care of themselves. See verses 2:220; 4:2-10; 4:36; 4:127; 6:152; 8:41; 17:34; 59:7; 90:15. **Following** your parents blindly is one of the greatest human tragedies. Not long after your birth, they decide your name, nationality, religion and sect. And you spend the rest of your life defending something you did not even choose. See verse 37:74.

provided they have taken care of their own families first. These are commandments of this guidance.[715]
[33:7] Recall that We took from the messengers their covenant, including you, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus the son of Mary. We took from them all a solemn pledge.
[33:8] Subsequently, He will surely question the honest about their truthfulness and He has prepared for the rejecters of this guidance a painful retribution.

THE BELIEVERS TESTED IN WAR

[33:9] O you who believe, remember God's blessing upon you. When forces attacked you, We sent upon them violent winds and aided you in ways you could not see. God sees everything you do.
[33:10] When they came from above you and from beneath you; your eyes were terrified and fear gripped your hearts to the point of death and you harboured unbefitting thoughts about God.
[33:11] That is when the believers were truly tested and they were severely shaken up.
[33:12] The hypocrites and those with doubts in their hearts said, "What God and His messenger promised us was no more than an illusion."
[33:13] A group of them said, "O people of Yathrib town, you cannot attain victory, go back." Others made up excuses to the messenger: "Our homes are vulnerable," when they were not vulnerable. They just wanted to flee.
[33:14] Had the enemy invaded and asked them to join, they would have joined the enemy without hesitation.
[33:15] They had pledged to God in the past that they would not turn around and run away; making a pledge with God means a great responsibility.
[33:16] Say: "Even if you flee, you can never escape from death or from being killed. No matter what happens, you only live a short while longer."
[33:17] Say: "Who would protect you from God if He willed any adversity or willed any blessing for you?" They can never find beside God any other sustainer and protector.
[33:18] God is fully aware of the stragglers among you and those who say to their comrades, "Let us all stay behind." Rarely do they mobilise for defence.
[33:19] Also, they are too miserly when dealing with you. If anything threatens the community, you see their eyes rolling with fear, as if death had already come to them. Once the crisis is over they whip you with their

[715] **Families come first** and parents have priority over all other relatives. When it comes to social and family welfare, parents must be given best care and attention. See verses and footnotes: 2:215; 6:151; 12:99-100; 17:23; 29:8; 31:4; 46:15. See also 2:220.

sharp tongues. They are too miserly with their wealth. These are not believers and consequently, God has nullified their works. This is easy for God to do.
[33:20] They thought that the allies might not come but when they came, they wished they were Bedouins within the Arab community who were watching you from a distance. Had you been attacked while they were with you, they would not have supported you.[716]

THE MESSENGER - A GOOD ROLE MODEL

[33:21] The messenger of God is an excellent example for those among you who remember God and their accountability to Him and continually hold on to His guidance.[717]
[33:22] When the true believers saw the parties ready to attack, they said, "This is what God and His messenger have promised us and God and His messenger are truthful." This situation only strengthened their conviction and augmented their belief in what they did.
[33:23] Among the believers there are people who fulfil their pledges with God. Some of them died while others stand ready, never wavering.
[33:24] God will surely recompense the honest for their truthfulness and will punish the hypocrites according to His ordinance or redeem them. God is the Protector and the Most Merciful.
[33:25] God repulsed those who disbelieved with rage and they left empty-handed. God thus spared the believers any fighting. God is Powerful, Almighty.
[33:26] He also brought down their allies among the people of the scripture from their secure positions and threw terror into their hearts. Some of them you killed and some you took captive.
[33:27] He made you inherit their land, their homes, their money and lands that you had never stepped on before. God is in full control of all things.

[33:28] O messenger, say to your wives, "If you are seeking this life and its vanities, then let me compensate you and allow you to go amicably.
[33:29] "But if you are seeking God and His message of guidance and the life of the Hereafter, then God has prepared for the righteous among you a great recompense."

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[716] **This verse** specifically refers to Bedouin Arabs and not Arabs in general. See verse and footnote 9:90.
[717] **All messengers** were exemplary in character as was Muhammad, although he is not mentioned by name here. Interestingly the same statement is used for Abraham and those with him [Verses 60:4 and 60:6] where Abraham is named. Yet, we don't have any hadith or chain of transmission that goes back to Abraham's time. Quran is the only source to find the life examples and principles Abraham lived by and should also be considered as the only source to find guidance that Muhammad as God's messenger not only conveyed but followed. Furthermore, it is Muhammad who was instructed to follow Abraham. See verses 3:95; 16:12; 60:4; 60:6.

[33:30] O wives of the messenger, if any of you commits a gross wrong, the retribution will be doubled for you. This is easy for God to do.
[33:31] Any one of you who obeys God and His messenger and leads a righteous life, We will grant her double the recompense and We have prepared for her a generous provision.

AN EXAMPLE FOR ALL WOMEN

[33:32] O wives of the messenger, you are not the same as any other women. Observe righteousness as you have a greater responsibility. Therefore, you shall be cautious and not speak too tenderly lest he in whose heart is a delusion, may develop mistaken desires. You shall speak only righteousness.[718]
[33:33] You shall make your homes your foundation and do not return to the permissiveness and ignorance of earlier people. You shall observe your commitments and keep them pure and fulfil your duty to God and obey His messenger. God wishes to remove all impurity of the beliefs in your system and to purify you completely.[719]
[33:34] Remember what is being recited of God's revealed guidance in your homes and the wisdom inherent therein. God is Sublime and aware of all things.

MEN AND WOMEN EQUAL BEFORE GOD

[33:35] The men who submitted to Deen-Islam, the women who submitted to Deen-Islam, the believing men, the believing women, the obedient men, the obedient women, the truthful men, the truthful women, the steadfast men, the steadfast women, the reverent men, the reverent women, the sincere men, the sincere women, the self-disciplined men, the self-disciplined women, the virtuous men, the virtuous women and the men who commemorate God and the women who commemorate God. God has given them protection and prepared for them a great recompense.[720]

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[718] **This verse** is self-explanatory regarding the behaviour between men and women. The messenger's wives are exemplary role models for all women who seek a higher standard of integrity and conduct. See footnote and verse 33:53.

[719] **The wives** of the messenger have a special status as role models and are obliged to fulfil their duty to God and obey the messenger. Since the messenger is no longer here, muslims follow the Quran, the message that still endures. **Way, system:** (Arai*c: bayt*) everyone lives by their own belief system or way of life. As this may not conform with Quranic values, we have to discard the beliefs, traditions and opinions that pollute them and keep our God-given values pure. See verses 2:125; 3:97; 109:1-6. **System:** (Arabic: *bayta*), and House (Arabic: *buyut*). See verse and footnote 71:28.

[720] **Are men and women equal?** This verse answers the question and leaves no doubt that both men and women are equal in respect of their deeds. However, it is obvious that there are physical, psychological and physiological differences that make them fit for their particular roles. As such men and women are complementary companions to each other and not competitors as is

[33:36] No believing man or believing woman should raise an objection if the messenger issues any command or decree from God. Anyone who disobeys God and His messenger has gone far astray.[721]

MARRIAGE TO ADOPTED SON'S DIVORCED WIFE

[33:37] Recall that you said to the one who was blessed by God and blessed by you, "Keep your wife and reverence God," and you hid inside yourself what God decreed you to proclaim. Thus, you feared your people, when you should have feared only God. When Zeid divorced his wife, We had you marry her in order to establish the precedent that a man can marry the divorced wife of his adopted son. God's commands shall be done.[722]

[33:38] The messenger does not commit an error by doing anything that is decreed by God. Such is God's way since the early generations. God's command leads to a destiny most sacred.[723]

[33:39] Those who deliver God's complete message and who reverence Him alone shall never fear anyone but God. God is the most efficient Reckoner.

DO NOT BE TOO PROUD

[33:40] It is not *muhammadun*: praiseworthy to be the father of any man, but to be a messenger of God and the seal of His envoys. God is fully aware of all things.[724]

[33:41] O you who believe, you shall always fulfil your duty to God.

[33:42] You shall glorify Him day and night.

[33:43] He is the One who is committed to you, together with His malaika, to lead you out of darkness into the light. He is Most Merciful towards the believers.[725]

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often wrongly portrayed. See verses 3:195; 4:32-34; 6:132; 16:97. **Equality and Equity.** See footnote to verse 10:109. **Self-discipline:** (Arabic: *sawma* Root: S'W'M). See verse 2:183.

[721] **Since** the messenger is no longer here, the Quran is God's message and any administrator of state affairs who acts within the Quranic decrees is now to be obeyed.

[722] **What** would people think if the messenger married his adopted son's ex-wife? The messenger failed to declare that God revealed for him to marry his adopted son's divorced wife to confirm that there is no wrong in a man marrying a woman previously married to his adopted son. This verse shows the human nature of the messenger's unwillingness to follow God's decree. However, God puts this event to right. See verses 7:188; 28:56; 41:6; 46:9; 60:12, There were other occasions when the messenger erred and was corrected by God. See verses 40:66; 80:1-12.

[723] **God's way:** (Arabic: *sunnatullah*) God's system is consistent and does not change. Unchanging principles in changing times: Permanent Values always remain the same. See verse 33:62.

[724] **Praiseworthy** (Arabic: *muhammadun*). This verse states that it is no badge of honour to be the father of a son - especially in preference to a daughter, whose arrival still is in many cultures considered a bad omen. See verses and footnotes 17:31; 43:15-21; 47:2. **Seal of revelation:** final communication (Arabic: *Khataman-Nabiyyin*). A nabi receives and delivers revelation and this Quran is the final culminating revelation delivered by His final nabi. See verse and footnote 7:157.

[725] **Commitments** (Arabic: *solaa.* Derivative: *yusolee*) of God: see verse 2:157; 33:56.

[33:44] Their greeting the day they meet Him will be, "Salamun: Peace," and He has prepared for them a generous recompense.[726]
[33:45] O messenger, we have sent you as a witness, a bearer of good news, as well as a warner.
[33:46] Inviting to God, in accordance with His ordinance and a guiding beacon.
[33:47] Deliver good news to the believers, that they have deserved from God a great blessing.
[33:48] Do not give in to those who reject this guidance and the hypocrites. Disregard their insults and put your trust in God; God suffices as an advocate.

WOMEN PERMISSIBLE TO MARRY & MARRIAGE LAWS

[33:49] O you who believe, if you married a believing woman, then divorced her before consummating the marriage, then she does not owe you any waiting interim before re-marriage. You shall compensate her equitably and let her go amicably.
[33:50] O messenger, We made lawful as wives for you those to whom you have paid their due mahr, and from those granted to you by God as prisoners of war. Also lawful for you in marriage are the daughters of your father's brothers, the daughters of your father's sisters, the daughters of your mother's brothers, the daughters of your mother's sisters, who have taken the challenge of this Deen with you. Also, if a believing woman gave herself to the messenger, by forfeiting the mahr; the messenger may marry her without a mahr, if he so wishes. However, her forfeiting of the mahr applies only to the messenger and not to the other believers. We have already decreed their rights in regard to their spouses or whom they already have. This is to spare you any blame. God is the Protector and the Most Merciful.[727]

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[726] **Peace** (Arabic: *salamun*). Greeting approved by God. See verse and footnote 6:54.

[727] **Marriage** is the key subject in this verse listing those women who are lawful in marriage - this includes any women taken as prisoners of war. These women must be mature adults and able to give their consent. Other marriage decrees such as giving the mahr must also be adhered to. **Muslim** men are prohibited from marrying women who were previously married to their fathers. Nor can a father marry the divorced wife of his genetic son. See verse 4:23. This divine commandment preserves respect for our fathers and their most private affairs. Similarly, the messenger was a respected figure for the believers of his time. For the good of those believers, God forbade them from marrying women who were previously married to the messenger. Marriage is a sacred and very private relationship and the messenger's private life was better kept private. See verses 4:22-28. **Mahr:** This is the groom's gift to the bride. See verse 2:236. **Marriage:** the criteria for a suitable marriage partner is first and most important criteria that he or she should be a muslim, that is someone who accepts and lives by the Quranic values. Other than that they can be of any race or culture. See verses 2:221; 4:22-28; 60:10-13.

[33:51] You may gently turn away from any one of them and you may bring any one of them closer to you. If you reconcile with any one you have estranged, you commit no error. In this way they will be pleased, will have no grief and will be content with what you equitably offer to all of them. God knows what is in your hearts. God is aware of all things and is clement.
[33:52] Beyond the categories described to you, you are not permitted to marry any other women nor can you substitute a new wife from the prohibited ones, no matter how much you desire them because of their beauty. You must be content with those already made lawful to you. God is watchful over all things.[728]

EXEMPLARY GOOD CONDUCT & DRESS CODE FOR WOMEN

[33:53] O you who believe, do not enter the messenger's homes unless you are given an invitation to eat nor shall you force such an invitation in any manner. If you are invited, you may enter. When you finish eating, you shall leave. Do not overstay your welcome, lingering and engaging in lengthy conversations.[729] This used to hurt the messenger and he was too courteous to tell you. But God does not shy away from the truth. If you have to ask his wives for something, ask them from behind a barrier. This is purer for your hearts and their hearts. You are not to hurt the messenger of God. You shall not marry his widows after him, for this would be a gross offense in the sight of God.[730]
[33:54] Whether you declare anything or hide it, God is fully aware of all things.
[33:55] The women may relax and wear casual dress around their fathers, their sons, their brothers, the sons of their brothers, the sons of their sisters, and other women and their female servants. They shall keep their duty to God. God witnesses all things.[731]

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[728] **The veil or the hijab** is not decreed in the Quran otherwise how could men be forbidden to marry certain women, even if they admired their beauty, when in fact they could not see their faces and beauty? See verse and footnote 28:26.
[729] **Conversation/discourse:** (Arabic: *hadith*). The example clearly shows that it is not good manners to hang around and engage in idle conversation. This also shows that God did not want any supplementary quotes from Muhammad to take root and this is why lingering for *'hadith'* was discouraged. **Hadith:** See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.
[730] **It is important** to note that while meetings between men and women are not forbidden there are some necessary restrictions. It is impossible for most men and women in their everyday lives to speak from behind a separating curtain or barrier. However, there can be unseen barriers that help impede bad behaviour. It is important therefore to engage with each other, especially those with whom marriage and by implication sex is not forbidden, in a reserved manner that is not flirtatious, evocative or in any way that may be mistaken or misconstrued. See verses 2:235; 33:32. **Barrier:** screen, cover, curtain. (Arabic: *hijab, hijaban*). 7:46; 17:45; 19:17; 38:32; 41:5; 42:51.
[731] **Dress code:** See verses and footnote 24:30-31.

[33:56] God and His malaika fulfil their commitments to the messenger. O you who believe, commit yourselves to him and to what he has accepted.[732]
[33:57] Surely, those who oppose God and His messenger, God afflicts them with a curse in this life and in the Hereafter; He has prepared for them a shameful retribution.
[33:58] Those who persecute the believing men and the believing women, who did not do anything wrong, have committed not only a falsehood, but also a grievous wrong.
[33:59] O messenger: convey to your wives, your daughters and the women of the believers that when they go out they shall wrap around themselves their cloaks or shawls to cover their cleavage so that they may be recognised as righteous and modest women and avoid being stared at. God is Protector and the Most Merciful.[733]

PERMISSION TO FIGHT THOSE WHO PERSECUTE

[33:60] Unless the hypocrites and those with disease in their hearts and the vicious liars in your social circles refrain from persecuting you, We surely grant you the authority to force them to leave immediately.
[33:61] They have incurred condemnation wherever they go, unless they stop attacking you, they may be taken and killed.[734]

THERE IS NO CHANGE IN GOD'S WAY

[33:62] God's methods are eternal and His way was the same before and you will find there is no change in the ways of God.[735]
[33:63] Some people ask you about when the time will come to implement all these things. Say: "The knowledge of this is only with God. For all that you know this may be very close."

THE FOLLOWERS BLAME THEIR LEADERS

[33:64] God has condemned the disbelievers and has prepared for them a hell of their own making.

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[732] **Commitments** (Arabic: *solaa.* Derivative: *yusolee*) of God: see verse 2:157; 33:43.
[733] **Women** are required to take additional care, dress modestly and not display their charms attracting unwanted attention when going about their business. See verse and footnote 33:35.
[734] **This instruction** is for agents of the state i.e. police, to arrest and present for judgement by the courts. If the crime means death penalty, they may be killed by means as determined by the administration. This is not an instruction for any vigilante to take the law into their own hands.
[735] **God's way:** method, practice, modus operandi. (Arabic: *sunnatullah*) God's system is constant and does not change. Everything happens in accordance with His fixed laws. Furthermore, unless a decree has been abrogated or changed by revealed law through an envoy, it remains the same as before and no individual is permitted to change this. To do so would be *shirk,* the setting up an authority equal to God. See verses 13:37; 17:77; 30:30; 33:38; 35:43; 40:85; 48:23. See also verses 7:70; 46:9; and 4:82; 7:157. **God's ordinance:** see verse 2:97.

[33:65] Eternally they abide therein. They will find no sustainer, nor a supporter.
[33:66] The day they are thrown into hell, they will say, "Oh, we wish we obeyed God and obeyed His guidance."
[33:67] They will also say, "Our Sustainer, we obeyed our leaders, elders, and dignitaries but they led us astray.
[33:68] "Our Sustainer, give them double the retribution and curse them a tremendous curse."
[33:69] O you who believe, do not be like those who hurt Moses, then God absolved him of what they said. He was, in the sight of God, honourable.
[33:70] O you who believe, reverence God and speak only the truth.
[33:71] He will then restore your works and protect you from your wrongs. Those who obey God and follow His guidance have made a great achievement.
[33:72] All the heavens and the earth and the mountains perform their duty, without fail. And the human being abused his freedom; he is transgressing and ignorant of the consequences.[736]
[33:73] For God will inevitably punish the hypocrite men and the hypocrite women, and the men who accept authorities to rank with God and the women who accept authorities to rank with God. God redeems the believing men and the believing women. God is the Protector and the Most Merciful.[737]

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[736] **Everything** in the universe is subject to laws determined by God. Everything follows His ordinance and keeps their duty to God. The human being follows these laws as far as his physical body is concerned, but his 'free' Self has choice and as we can see from examples given in the Quran he has abused this freedom by causing chaos, corruption and bloodshed in the world. See verse and footnote 2:30.

[737] **Hypocrite**: (Arabic: *munafiq,* Root N'F'Q. Derivatives: *nafaqa, nafaqu, nifaq*). The hypocrites feign highly desirable qualities and attitudes that receive great approval, while in their private life such opinions belie their public statements. It is these people who are *munafiq*, those that are stingy and grudging when it comes to self-sacrifice and *expending* their Self for the good of others. The *munafiq* holds back in everything except that which is in their self-interest. See verse 2:9.

Disbeliever: (Arabic: *kafir.* Disbelief*: kuffr*). The Arabic word *kafir* has simply been translated as 'disbeliever', but it really means much more than that. The *kaffir* is a person who openly rejects, denies or conceals the truth of this guidance. What do they actually reject? The rejection is in fact the refusal to accept values that advance society, the values that God decrees in the Quran. For example to fulfil one's commitments with sincerity, to advocate good and stop badness, strive against oppression and injustice, to promote fair trade and social welfare, to honour parents and to stop the killing of children and also accountability to God. These are just some of the values found in the Quran that, when applied, eradicate social ills in communities. It is these Permanent Values and Absolute Laws that move forward the procession of life, to develop the society and one's Self and make it fit for the life yet to come. It is these values and laws the *kafir*, the disbeliever, rejects.

Sacrifice: Why would anyone be willing to die for a cause if they do not believe in a life yet to come? A person may be willing to sacrifice their life so that following generations may have a

Sura 34: Sheba (Saba)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[34:1] Praise be to God; to whom belongs everything in the heavens and the earth; all praise is also due to Him in the Hereafter. He is the Most Wise and aware of all things.
[34:2] He knows everything that goes into the earth and everything that comes out of it, and everything that comes down from the sky and everything that climbs into it. He is the Most Merciful and the Protector.
[34:3] Those who disbelieve have said, "The time of reckoning will never come" Say: "Absolutely, by my Sustainer, it will most certainly come to you. He is the knower of the future. Not even the equivalent of an atom's weight or less is hidden from Him, be it in the heavens or the earth. Not even smaller than that or greater than that is hidden from Him. All are in a profound record."
[34:4] Most certainly, He will reward those who believe and lead a righteous life. These have deserved protection and a generous provision.
[34:5] As for those who constantly challenge Our guidance, they have incurred a retribution of a painful humiliation.
[34:6] It is evident to those who are endowed with knowledge that this revelation from your Sustainer to you is the truth and that it guides to the path of the Almighty, the Most Praiseworthy.
[34:7] Those who disbelieve have said, "Let us show you a man who tells you that after you are torn apart you will be created anew.
[34:8] "Either he fabricated lies about God or he is crazy." Indeed, those who disbelieve in the life yet to come have incurred the worst retribution: they have gone far astray.
[34:9] Have they not seen all the things around them in the universe? If We willed, We could have caused the earth to swallow them or caused comets to fall on them from the sky. These should be sufficient signs for every person who can understand.[738]

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better future but in such circumstance you will not see many of the ruling elite rushing for the frontline. Only a person who has conviction in the sovereignty of God and ultimate accountability to Him will find that the sacrifice of a lower value for a higher value is worthwhile, especially the definitive sacrifice of his or her life. This opportunity is open only to those who sincerely believe and live by the Permanent Values given in the Quran. See verses and footnotes 2:8; 3:157; 4:78.

[738] **How are comets diverted from the earth?** Astronomers believe that one reason Earth is habitable is that the gravity of Jupiter does help protect us from some comets. Long-period comets, in particular, enter the solar system from its outer reaches. Jupiter's gravity is thought to sling most of these fast-moving ice balls out of the solar system before they can get close to Earth. So long-period comets are thought to strike Earth only on very long timescales of millions or tens of millions of years. Without Jupiter nearby, long-period comets would collide with our planet much more frequently.

[34:10] We endowed David with blessings from Us: he used the mountains and the birds to his benefit and learned how to melt iron, consistent with Our laws.
[34:11] They made shields that fitted perfectly and worked righteousness. Whatever you do, I am seer all things.
[34:12] Solomon had knowledge of the winds that travelled one month coming and one month going. And from the ground We caused a black gold to gush out for him. Also the covert tribes worked for him, by his Sustainer's leave. Any one of them who disregarded Our commands was subject to a severe retribution in accordance with God's ordinance.
[34:13] They made for him anything he wanted: niches, statues, deep pools and heavy cooking pots. O family of David, work righteousness to show your appreciation. Only a few of My servants are appreciative.[739]
[34:14] When the appointed time for his demise came, they had no clue that it had happened. It was not until one of the animals tried to eat his staff and he fell down, that a covert worker realised that he was dead. They thus realised that if they really knew the truth, they would have stopped working so hard as soon as he became weak and frail.
[34:15] The land of Sheba used to be a marvel, with two gardens; one on the right and one the left. Eat from your Sustainer's provisions and be appreciative of Him. You have fertile land and a protecting Sustainer.
[34:16] They turned away, and consequently, We poured upon them a disastrous flood and We substituted their two gardens into two gardens of bitter-tasting fruits, thorny plants and a meagre harvest.
[34:17] We thus punished them for their waywardness. Do We not punish only the rejecters of this guidance?
[34:18] We placed between them and the communities that We blessed other oases and We secured the journeys between them: "Travel therein days and nights in complete security."
[34:19] But they turned unappreciative and challenged: "Our Sustainer, we do not care if You increase the distance of our journeys without any stations." They thus wronged their own Self. Consequently, We made them history,[740] and scattered them into small communities throughout the land. This should provide lessons for those who are steadfast, appreciative.
[34:20] They readily fulfilled their egotistical expectations. They followed their Ego, except a few believers.

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[739] **As this verse shows,** statues are not necessarily idols for worship: they can be beautiful artefacts for display. Here we are told that Solomon, a messenger of God, has statues made for himself, perhaps to display in his palace. See also verses 26:71; 37:91; 37:125-128 & 68:37; 26:71.
[740] **History** (Arabic: *hadith*). People who rejected God's guidance became stories of bygone ages to be told as reminders of the consequences of the corrupt. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.

[34:21] They were strong in willpower, but conceded to their base desires. And We thus distinguish those who believe in the life yet to come from those who are doubtful about it. Your Sustainer is in full control of all things.
[34:22] Say: "Implore the authorities you have set up as equals with God. They do not possess as much as a grain in the universe. They possess no share therein nor does He permit them to be His partner.

INTERCESSION IS UNDESERVED FAVOURITISM

[34:23] Intercession with Him will be in vain, unless it coincides with His laws. When their minds are finally settled down and they are asked, "What did your Sustainer say?" they will say, "The truth. He is the Most High, the Most Great."
[34:24] Say: "Who provides for you from the heavens and the earth?" Say: "God," and "Either we or you are guided and one of us has gone far astray."[741]
[34:25] Say: "You are not responsible for what we do, nor are we responsible for what you do."[742]
[34:26] Say: "Our Sustainer will gather us all together before Him, then He will judge between us equitably. He is the Judge and aware of all things."
[34:27] Say: "Show me the authorities you have set up as equals with Him?" Say: "No; He is the One God, the Almighty, Most Wise."
[34:28] We have sent you as a messenger to all the people, a bearer of good news, as well as a warner, but most people do not know.
[34:29] They challenge, "When will this promise come to pass, if you are truthful?"
[34:30] Say: "You have a specific time, on a specific day, that you cannot delay or advance by one moment and it is consistent with His ordinance"

LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS DISPUTE

[34:31] Those who disbelieve have said, "We will not believe in this Quran, nor in the previous scriptures." If you could only envision these transgressors when they stand before their Sustainer. They will argue with one another back and forth. The followers will tell their conceited leaders, "If it were not for you, we would have been believers."[743]
[34:32] The egotistical leaders will say to those who followed them, "Are we the ones who diverted you from the guidance after it came to you? No, it is you who were wicked."

[741] **Where** there are two conflicting beliefs, one or both of them can be wrong. Both cannot be right. It is the one with the substance that is proved to be enduring and true.
[742] **Intercession** is undeserved favouritism. See corresponding footnote to verse 2:254.
[743] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verse and footnote 2:185. See also 40:47.

[34:33] The followers will say to their vain leaders, "It was you who schemed night and day, then beguiled us to be unappreciative of God and to set up authorities to rank with Him." They will be ridden with remorse, when they see the retribution, for We will place shackles around the necks of those who rejected this guidance. Are they not justly punished for what they did?
[34:34] Every time We sent a warner to a community, the leaders of that community said, "We reject the guidance you are sent with."
[34:35] They also said, "We are more powerful, with more money and children and we will not be punished."
[34:36] Say: "My Sustainer is the One who controls all provisions. He grants provisions in accordance with His ordinance or reduces them in accordance with His ordinance, but most people do not know."
[34:37] It is not your money or your children that bring you closer to Us. Only those who believe in this guidance and lead a righteous life will receive the reward for their works, multiplied manifold. In the abode of harmony they will live in perfect peace.
[34:38] As for those who consistently challenge Our revelations, they will abide in retribution.
[34:39] Say: "My Sustainer is the One who controls all provisions; He increases the provisions for whomever He chooses from among His servants or reduces them. Anything you spend in the cause of God, He will reward you for it. He is the best provider."[744]
[34:40] On the day when He summons them all, He will say to the malaika, "Did these people worship you?"
[34:41] They will answer, "Be You glorified. You are our Sustainer and Protector, not them. Instead, they were worshipping even the ones they could not see, and most of them professed to be believers."[745]
[34:42] On that day, you possess no power to help or harm one another and We will say to the transgressors, "Taste the retribution of the hell that you used to deny."
[34:43] When Our guidance is recited to them, perfectly clear, they said, "This is simply a man who wants to divert you from those your parents serve." They also said, "These are lies." Those who disbelieved also said about the truth that came to them: "This is obviously sorcery."[746]

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[744] **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verses and footnotes 2:215; 21:112..
[745] **Those who fail** to serve God worship anything: things they see and things they cannot see, and yet most of these are professed believers in God. See verse and footnote 12:106.
[746] **Following** your parents blindly is one of the greatest human tragedies. Not long after your birth, they decide your name, nationality, religion and sect. And you spend the rest of your life defending something you did not even choose. See verse 37:74.

[34:44] We did not give them any other guidance to study nor did We send to them a messenger before you as a warner.[747]
[34:45] Those before them disbelieved and this without any mature understanding of even a portion of the signs We have given to this generation, when they disbelieved My message. How severe was the punishment they incurred according to My ordinance!
[34:46] Say: "I ask you to do one thing: dedicate yourselves to God's System, in pairs or as individuals, then reflect." Your companion, the messenger, is not fanatical. He is a manifest warner to you: follow this guidance he brought before the advent of a terrible retribution.
[34:47] Say: "I do not ask you for any payment or recompense; I am not after your money. My reward comes only from God. He witnesses all things."
[34:48] Say: "My Sustainer causes the truth to prevail. He is the Knower of every secret."
[34:49] Say: "The truth has come, while falsehood can neither initiate anything nor repeat it."
[34:50] Say: "If I go astray, I go astray because of my own shortcomings. And if I am guided, it is because of my Sustainer's inspiration. He is Hearer and is near."

DESTINY OF THOSE WHO UPHOLD CONJECTURE

[34:51] If you could only see them when the great terror strikes, then they cannot escape and they will be compelled in the direction they choose.
[34:52] They will then say, "We now believe in the guidance," but it will be far too late.[748]
[34:53] Indeed they have rejected it, as did those in the past. Instead, they uphold conjecture and opinion about things they do not know.[749]
[34:54] Consequently, they were deprived of everything they longed for. This is the same destiny as their counterparts from the previous generations. They harboured too many doubts.[750]

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[747] **This verse** conclusively shows that the Arab nation was not sent a messenger before Muhammad and any claims to justify the building of the Ka'ba or that the ritual prayers or pilgrimage rites were instigated by Abraham and Ishmael while in Mecca are nullified. See verses 32:3; 28:46.
[748] **Belief** when close to death is of no practical use. See Verse 10.90.
[749] **People** of all religions tend to lay aside the guidance of God and uphold the false words of men. The Jews uphold the traditions of the mishnah and gemarrah and the 'Muslims' uphold the spurious hadith and sunnah respectively, while the Christians uphold the doctrine of trinity and the Creed of Apostles invented by the Nicene Conference around 300 years after Jesus. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:38.
[750] **Destiny:** (Arabic: *qadr*). To have determined objective and conclusion. All actions have determined outcomes and these can be said to be *taqdir* (derived from the word *qadr*). A person is free to make choices but, once the choice is made, is not free from the consequences of that

Sura 35: The Initiator (Faatir)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[35:1] Praise be to God, initiator of the heavens and the earth and appointer of the malaika to be the messengers to perform many tasks and serve many purposes. He adds to His creation consistent with His ordinance. God is All-powerful.[751]
[35:2] When God bestows mercy on communities, no force can stop it, and if He withholds his mercy, no force, other than He, can release it. He is the Almighty, Most Wise.
[35:3] O people, remember God's blessings upon you. Is there any creator other than God who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? There is no authority to rank with Him. How could you deviate?
[35:4] If people disbelieve this message, previous guidance has also been rejected. God is in control of all things.
[35:5] O people, God's promise is the truth, therefore do not be distracted by this lowly life. Do not be diverted from God by mere illusions.[752]

YOU CAN BE YOUR OWN WORST ENEMY

[35:6] Your egotistical Self is your enemy, so treat it as an enemy. It only influences those who neglect their will to be strong and corrupts them towards a turmoil of hell.
[35:7] Those who reject this guidance have incurred a severe retribution and those who believe and lead a righteous life have deserved protection and a great recompense.
[35:8] Note the one whose evil work seems good in his eyes, until he believes that it is righteous. God's ordinance thus allows astray whoever wills to go astray and His ordinance guides whoever wills to be guided. Therefore, do not grieve over them. God is fully aware of everything they do.[753]

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choice and the results then become the determined destiny of the individual. Belief in fate or predetermination has no place in deen Islam. See verse and footnote 97:1.

[751] **Malaika** is the collective term for the energies, forces of nature and the messengers of the universe. When an electrical impulse sends a signal from the brain to execute a physical function of the body, it is a malaika. The energy that comes from the sun to the earth is a malaika. A multitude of tasks are made possible and facilitated by the malaika that function within God's law.

[752] **This life** is a means to an end. It is a good life that has to be used to gain a greater life. In doing so we give up a lower value for a higher value.

[753] **From an** individual to a superpower, when they do wrong they try to justify their actions. Governments that invade weaker countries on the pretext of 'helping them' have deluded themselves into thinking that no matter how much good they try to do, there will always be collateral damage: i.e human death and suffering. According to Chomsky, they have even coined a phrase 'The Paradox of Grace' to justify these aggressive actions. In their eyes, the evil they do seems good to them.

HOW DOES RESURRECTION WORK?

[35:9] God is the One who sends by His ordinance the winds to stir up clouds, then We drive them towards barren lands and revive such lands after they were dead. Thus is the resurrection.

[35:10] Anyone seeking dignity should know that to God belongs all dignity. To Him ascends the good words and He exalts the righteous works. As for those who scheme evil works, they incur severe retribution; the scheming of such people is destined to fail.

PEOPLE NEED GOD - GOD NEEDS NO ONE

[35:11] God created you from clay, then from a tiny drop and He continues to give life and you reproduce through your spouses. No female becomes pregnant or gives birth without His knowledge. No life survives beyond its period and no life is cut short, except that all life is sustained in accordance with His ordinance. All this is easy for God.[754]

[35:12] The two seas are not the same: one is fresh and delicious, while the other is salty and undrinkable. From each of them you eat tender meat and extract jewellery to wear. And you see the ships sailing on them, seeking His provisions that you may be appreciative.

[35:13] He merges the night into the day and merges the day into the night. He has committed the sun and the moon to run for a predetermined period. Such is God your Sustainer, to Him belongs everything. Any authorities you set up beside Him do not possess as much as a seed husk.

[35:14] If you call on them, they cannot hear you. Even if they hear you, they cannot respond to you. On the Day of Resurrection they will disown you. None can inform you like the One aware of all things.

[35:15] O people, you are the ones who need God, while God is in no need of anyone, the Most Praiseworthy.

[35:16] If He wills, He can eliminate all of you and substitute a new creation.

[35:17] This is not too difficult for God.

[35:18] No Self will bear the wrongs of another Self. If a Self is loaded with wickedness and implores another to bear part of its weight, no other Self will be able to bear any part of it, even if they were closely related. The only people to heed these warnings are those who hold fast to this revealed guidance from the One who sustains them, even when alone in their privacy, observing their commitments. Whoever purifies his Self, does so for his own good. To God is the final accountability.[755]

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[754] **To Give Life:** to prosper, sustain, cultivate or flourish (Arabic: *Amr* root M'R). See verses and footnotes 9:18; 36:82. See verses and footnotes 7:201 & 65:11.

[755] **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*). Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. See verse 2:43 and footnote. Fulfilling your commitments purifies you and strengthens your Self. The satisfaction of having completed an obligation is beyond compare. See footnote to

[35:19] The blind and the seeing are not equal.
[35:20] Neither is zulm: the depths of darkness, and the light.[756]
[35:21] Nor are the coolness of the shade and the heat of the sun.
[35:22] Or are the living and the dead; God causes whomever He wills to hear. You cannot be heard by those in graves.
[35:23] You are no more than a warner.
[35:24] We have sent you with the truth; a bearer of good news, as well as a warner. There is no community that has not received a warner.
[35:25] If they reject this, those before them have also disbelieved. Their messengers went to them with clear signs and the Zabur scripture, a book with enlightening guidance.
[35:26] Subsequently, I punished those who rejected My guidance. How terrible was My retribution!

GOD'S CREATIONS: IMPLICIT WITH HIS SIGNS

[35:27] Do you not realise that it is God who sends down from the sky water which produces fruits of various colours? Even the mountains have different colours; the peaks are white or red or some other colour such as black.
[35:28] Also, the people, the animals and the livestock come in various hues. The people who truly reverence God are those who are knowledgeable. God is Almighty Protector.[757]

QURAN: SUPERSEDES AND CONSUMMATES PREVIOUS GUIDANCE

[35:29] Surely, those who accept this book of God, observe their commitments and from Our provisions to them they spend for social welfare of their community, privately and publicly and are engaged in an investment that never loses.[758]
[35:30] He will recompense them generously and will multiply His blessings upon them. He is Protecting and Responsive.

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verse 2:43. Each person is responsible for his own actions and will pay for the consequences. The most exalted character is the person who will do good even when no other person is looking, because he knows that he is accountable, first to himself and ultimately to God. See also verse 31:33.

[756] **Depths of darkness,** i.e. displacement of order. (Arabic: *zulm.* Derivatives: *zalim, zalimah, zalimeen*). *Zulm* is the antonym of *islam.* Whereas Islam (the Permanent Values and Absolute laws) harmonise, zulm is the displacement of these values and laws causing 'life to be in the depths of darkness'. *Zalim:* one who causes displacement.

[757] **In the natural world** there are many signs of the One who designed these wonders and we can go on a journey of discovery to unravel these signs. The scientists who study these things are the ones who discover the true wonders of the world and they share this knowledge with us.

[758] **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verses and footnotes 2:215; 21:112.

[35:31] What We revealed to you in this guidance is the truth, consummating all previous guidance. God is fully aware of His servants and sees all things.
[35:32] We passed the guidance from generation to generation and We allowed whomever We chose from among Our servants to receive it. Subsequently, some of them wronged their Self, others upheld it only part of the time, while others were eager to work righteousness in accordance with God's ordinance; this is the greatest triumph.

THE BENEFACTORS OF MANKIND

[35:33] They will enter the gardens of Aden, where they will be adorned with fine things and their garments will be made of beautiful material.
[35:34] They will say, "Thank God for removing all our worries. Our Sustainer is Protector and Responsive.
[35:35] "He has admitted us into the abode of eternal peace and honoured us with elegance. We have many activities here and We never get tired."

THE REJECTERS OF THIS GUIDANCE

[35:36] As for those who disbelieve, they have incurred the fiery torment of hell where they are never finished by death, nor is the retribution ever commuted for them. We thus requite the unappreciative.
[35:37] They will suffer therein, "Our Sustainer, if you get us out of here, we will work righteousness, instead of what we used to do." Did We not give you a life-long chance, with continuous reminders for those who would take heed? Did you not receive a warner? Therefore, taste the consequences of your own deeds. The transgressors will have no one to help them.
[35:38] God is the knower of the future of the heavens and the earth. He is the knower of all your innermost thoughts.
[35:39] He is the One who made you successors on earth. Subsequently, whoever chooses to reject this guidance does so to his own detriment. The disbelief of the rejecters only augments their Sustainer's abhorrence towards them. The rejection of the disbelievers plunges them deeper into loss and adds to their own undoing.[759]
[35:40] Say: "Consider the authorities you have set up to equal God. Show me what on earth have they created." Do they own any share in the

[759] **Rejecters/Disbelievers** (Arabic*: Kafir*) cannot share the benefits of an Islamic social order because they will not accept the responsibilities that go with it and therefore they must bear the loss and suffering. By rejection they have closed the doors to development, stability, peace and security. However, if at any time they feel remorse and repent, they can enter the Deen-Islam without let or hindrance. See verse and footnote 109:6. **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112. **Successor** (Arabic: *khalifa*). See verse and footnote 2:30.

heavens? Have We given them another book wherein there is no doubt?[760] Indeed, what the transgressors promise one another is no more than an illusion.
[35:41] God is the One who sustains the heavens and the earth, lest they vanish. If anyone else was to hold them, they will most certainly disintegrate. He is Compassionate and Protector.
[35:42] They swore by God solemnly that if a warner went to them, they would be better guided than any other community. However, now that a warner did come to them, this only plunged them deeper into aversion.
[35:43] They resorted to arrogance on earth and evil ways and scheming. Their evil conspiring only backfired on those who plotted them. Should they then expect anything but the same end of those who did similar things in the past? You will find that there is no alternative to God's way; you will find no change in God's way.[761]
[35:44] Have they not travelled the earth and noted the consequences for those who preceded them? They were even stronger than they. Nothing can be hidden from God in the heavens or on the earth. He is aware of all things and is All-powerful.
[35:45] If God instantaneously punished all the people for their crimes, He would not leave a single creature on earth. But He respites them for a predetermined time. Once their interim is fulfilled, then God holds to account all His servants.

[760] **While professing** belief in the Quran, people generally apply doctrines from other books. These books (and their writers) are in fact their authorities that they have set up as equal to the Quran, and equal to God. These books, they contend, are the sayings of the messenger and supplementary to the Quran. However, these are fabrications that divert people from the guidance in the Quran. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.
[761] **God's way:** (Arabic: *sunnatullah*) God's system is constant and does not change. Unchanging principles in changing times: Permanent Values always remain the same. See verse 33:62.

Sura 36: Ya Seen (Ya Seen)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[36:1] Y. S.
[36:2] And the Quran that is full of wisdom.[762]
[36:3] Most assuredly, you are one of God's messengers of his guidance
[36:4] to the straight and balanced path.
[36:5] This revelation is from the Almighty, Most Merciful.
[36:6] To warn people whose forefathers and parents were never warned and therefore, they are unaware.
[36:7] However, it is the truth that most of them will choose not to believe.
[36:8] That is because they become mentally shackled as an effect of their regressive thinking. Consequently they become locked in their denial.
[36:9] And they imagine a barrier in front of them and a barrier behind them and thus a shroud surrounds them and they are unable to see the harm they do to themselves.
[36:10] For these people it is the same whether you warn them or not, they cannot believe.
[36:11] You will be heeded only by those who want to uphold this message and reverence the Most Gracious, even when alone in their privacy. Give them good news of protection and a generous recompense.
[36:12] We will certainly revive the dead and We have recorded everything they have done in this life as well as the consequences that continue after their death. Everything We have entered in a profound record.

MESSENGER'S SOLE MISSION TO DELIVER THE MESSAGE

[36:13] Cite for them the example of people in a community to whom the messengers went.
[36:14] When We sent to them two messengers, they disbelieved them. We then supported them by a third. They said, "We are God's messengers to you."
[36:15] They said, "You are no more than human beings like us. The Most Gracious did not reveal anything through you. You are liars."
[36:16] They said, "Our Sustainer knows that we have been sent to you.
[36:17] "Our sole mission is to deliver the complete clear message."
[36:18] They said, "We consider you bad omens. Unless you refrain, we will surely stone you or afflict you with painful retribution."[763]
[36:19] They said, "Good or bad omen depends on what you perceive, now that you have been reminded. Indeed, you are transgressing people."

[762] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verse and footnote 2:185.
[763] **Stoning** as a punishment is not decreed in the Quran. In the Quran, stoning is only carried out by mushrik people, disbelievers and those who reject this guidance. See verse 11:91.

[36:20] A righteous man came from the other end of the city, saying, "O my people, follow the messengers.
[36:21] "Follow those who are guided; they are the ones who do not ask you for any payment or recompense.
[36:22] "Why should I not serve the One who initiated me and to Him is your ultimate accountability?
[36:23] "Shall I set up authorities to rank with Him? If the Most Gracious willed any harm for me, their intercession cannot help me one iota nor can they rescue me.
[36:24] "In that case, I would be totally astray.
[36:25] "I have believed in your Sustainer; please listen to me."
[36:26] At the time of death the righteous will be told, "Enter a peaceful place." He will say, "Oh, I wish my people knew.
[36:27] "That my Sustainer protected me and made me honourable."
[36:28] We did not send down upon his people, after him, forces from the sky; We did not need to send them down.
[36:29] All it took was one blow, whereupon they were stilled.
[36:30] How sorry is the people's condition? Every time a messenger went to them, they always ridiculed him.
[36:31] Did they not see how many generations We annihilated before them and how they never return?
[36:32] Every one of them will be summoned before Us.

[36:33] One sign for them is the dead land: We revive it and produce from it grains for their food.
[36:34] We grow in it gardens of date palms and grapes and We cause springs to gush out therein.
[36:35] This is to provide them with fruits and to let them make with their own hands whatever they need. Would they then be thankful?
[36:36] Glory be to the One who created in pairs all kinds of plants from the earth, as well as themselves and other creations that they do not even know.[764]

[36:37] Another sign for them is the night: We remove the daylight, whereupon they are in darkness.
[36:38] The sun follows a specific course, according to the design of the Almighty, the One aware of all things.

[764] **Until recent history** it was thought that only man and animals were in pairs as males and females. However the Quran said that everything is created in pairs and science confirms that all matter, and not only living things, is in pairs: matter, antimatter electrons and positrons, quarks and antiquarks. See verses and footnotes 13:13; 20:53.

[36:39] The moon We designed to appear in stages, until it appears like a thin curve.
[36:40] The sun never catches up with the moon, each of them is moving in its designated orbit; the night and the day never deviate from their cycle.
[36:41] Another sign for them is that We carried their ancestors on the ship.
[36:42] Then We created the same for them to sail in.
[36:43] If We willed, We could have drowned them so that their screaming would not be heard nor could they be saved.
[36:44] Instead, We shower them with mercy and let them enjoy for a while.
[36:45] Yet when they are told, "Learn from your past to work righteousness for your future, that you may attain mercy,"
[36:46] No matter what kind of proof is given to them from their Sustainer, they consistently disregard it.
[36:47] When they are told, "Spend for the good of social welfare from God's provisions to you," those who disbelieve say to those who believe, "Why should we give to those whom God could feed, if He so willed?" Indeed, they really are far astray.[765]
[36:48] They also challenge, "When will that promise come to pass, if you are truthful?"
[36:49] All they feel will be one blow that overwhelms them, while they dispute.
[36:50] They will not even have time to make a bequest nor will they be able to return to their people.
[36:51] The signal will be given whereupon they will rise from the grave and go to their Sustainer.
[36:52] They will say, "Misery to us. Who resurrected us from our death? This is what the Most Gracious has promised. The messengers were right."
[36:53] All it will take is one blow whereupon they are summoned before Us.
[36:54] On that day no Self will be wronged in the least. You will be paid in exact measure for all that you did.
[36:55] The dwellers of peace will be happy on that day and full of activity.
[36:56] They abide with their companions in beautiful shade, enjoying comfortable furnishings.
[36:57] They will have fruits therein; they will have anything they wish for.
[36:58] Greetings of peace from a most merciful Sustainer.

[36:59] As for you, the guilty ones, you will be set aside.
[36:60] Did I not make a promise with you, Children of Adam, that you shall not give in to your egotistical Self? That it is your own worst enemy?
[36:61] And that you shall serve Me alone? This is the right path.

[765] **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verses and footnotes 2:215; 21:112.

[36:62] The egotistical Self has misled multitudes of people. Did you not possess any understanding?
[36:63] This is the hell of your own making that was promised for the corrupt.
[36:64] Today you will burn in it, as a consequence of your rejecting this guidance.[766]

THE QURAN: A WARNING FOR THOSE WHO ARE ALIVE

[36:65] On the day of reckoning; you do not need to speak; your hands and feet will bear witness to everything you had done.
[36:66] Consistent with Our ordinance, your eyes can become veiled, consequently, when you seek the truth, you cannot see.
[36:67] Consistent with Our ordinance, you become frozen in your situation; thus, you can neither move forward nor go back.
[36:68] Whoever lives a long life consistent with Our ordinance, reverts back to weakness. Our ordinance does not fail to produce results consistent with Our laws. Do you not understand?
[36:69] What We taught the messenger was not poetry, nor was he a poet. This is nothing less than a formidable sign and a clear and profound Quran.
[36:70] To warn those who are alive and to expose those who reject this guidance.[767]
[36:71] Have they not seen that We created for them with Our own design, including the livestock that they own?
[36:72] And We subdued many animals for them; some they ride and some they eat.
[36:73] They derive other benefits from them as well as drinks. Would they not be appreciative?
[36:74] They set up beside God, authorities to rank with Him, thinking, perhaps they can be of help to them.
[36:75] In reality, they cannot help them and they end up devoted in service to them.[768]
[36:76] Therefore, do not be saddened by their utterances. We are fully aware of everything they conceal and everything they declare.
[36:77] Does the human being not see that We created him from a tiny drop, then he turns into an ardent antagonist?
[36:78] He sets forth a question to Us, while forgetting his initial creation: "Who can resurrect our bones after they have decomposed?"

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[766] **Adam's shaitan:** his egotistical Self: See verses and footnote 2:30-39.
[767] **When a person** is near death or dying, sometimes people recite this sura. This sura is also often recited for those who have died. However, God tells us that the Quran is a warning for those who are ALIVE because it is a guidance for developing the Self; therefore, during or after death the opportunity for this activity is diminished and a reminder to heed this guidance is of no benefit. Indeed, a warning to those who are alive, those who still have time. See verses and footnotes 10:90-92; 39:53-64; 47:18.
[768] **Setting up** as protectors (authorities) to rank or rival with God. See verse 39:3.

[36:79] Say: "The One who initiated them in the first place will resurrect them. He is fully aware of every creation."
[36:80] He is the One who creates for you from the green trees, fuel which you burn for light.[769]
[36:81] Is the One who created the heavens and the earth not able to recreate the same? Indeed, He is the Creator and the One aware of all things.
[36:82] All He needs to do to initiate anything is to say: "Be," and it is.[770]
[36:83] Therefore, glory be to the One in whose hand is the sovereignty over all things and to Him you will be returned.

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[769] **Someone** who has no knowledge of the element of life, carbon, might think that the example of bones has no link with that of trees. But, the link is established when science shows that the connection is carbon. A carbon atom that today exists in a rock may once have formed part of a bone or a leaf and in the future, may once again find its way into living matter. The carbon atom is stable even if that bone or leaf is reduced to burnt-down ash. See verse and footnote 17:50.

[770] **God creates** and directs his creation, but only within laws that He puts into place. From this verse and the preceding verses it can be concluded all God's creations are a process of His ordinance, God does not say 'Be' and things appear as if by magic. God initiates the process and all proceeds according to and within His laws. See verse and footnote 3:59. **People often imagine** that God created man with the command 'Be' that instantly turned a mound of clay into Adam and then from his rib He created Eve. This cannot be true, as science gives a completely different picture and this is consistent with the Quran's statement that God created humans from clay. However, we are not talking about the clay we see today. The clay that life first started from was primordial chemical-rich material and the process took many billions of years. From this 'clay' emerged the first form of 'life' that started the evolutionary process of all living matter, plants, animals and present-day human beings. Science confirms that life is not just biological, it is biochemical and the question is: **What is one of the central qualities that defines life?** The answer is the ability to reproduce or self-replicate. It is now considered that the original self-replicator is DNA. Were there self-replicating genes before DNA that would not have been so susceptible to damage by the early environment on earth? Something that could acquire and retain information and use that information to interact with its environment? Crystals possess these qualities. Crystalline forms not only interacted with their environment in a complex and ordered way but also possessed an innate tendency to evolve. That crystalline form was the colloidal suspension of quartz particles in water, more commonly known as *clay*. This type of clay, a fine-grained substance possibly consisted of aluminum silicate, quartz and organic fragments. What generated the 'spark' of life? Piezoelectricity is the ability of some materials, notably crystals to generate an electrical potential in response to applied mechanical stress. The pressure some crystals may have experienced induced the necessary stress required to create the first 'life', in the crystals suspended in the clay. This colloidal suspension is the 'primordial soup' or 'clay' from which that first spark of life came. *(Research: A. G. Cairns-Smith. University of Glasgow 1988).* So the Quran's statement that God created the human beings from clay is correct, with the process of evolution taking place over a very long period. **The Quran gives the essence** of this life-giving aspect of clay and it is the scientists who are now discovering the fascinating details. It should be noted however, that humans (homo sapiens), did not descend from apes but had a common ancestor, and are part of the hominid family. **Creation and development of the Self.** See verses and footnotes 6:2; 7:9; 11:61; 15:26,28; 30:20; 32:7; 35:11; 37:11; 38:71; 40:67; 53:32; 55:14; 84:19. See also 4:1; 6:98 & 51:56; 67:2; 71: 14; 71:17; 76:2; 94:5-8.

Sura 37: The Columns (Al-Saffat)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[37:1] The arrangers who align themselves in positions ordained.[771]
[37:2] The ones who drive away the wicked with reproof.
[37:3] Those who are with the ones who recite this messages of guidance.
[37:4] Your God is the One God.
[37:5] The One who sustains the heavens and the earth and everything between them and the sustainer of the East.

[37:6] We have adorned the lowest heaven with beautiful planets.
[37:7] We guard it from every evil egotistic Self.
[37:8] They cannot discover any of the higher terrenes; they get repelled from every side.
[37:9] They have been condemned; they have incurred an eternal retribution.
[37:10] If any of them ventures to charge the outer limits, he gets struck with a fierce projectile.

THE DAY OF RESURRECTION

[37:11] Ask them, "Are they more difficult to create or the other creations?" We created them from clay.[772]
[37:12] While you are awed, they mock.
[37:13] When reminded, they take no heed.
[37:14] When they see clear evidence, they ridicule.
[37:15] They say, "This is obviously some illusion.
[37:16] "After we die and become dust and bones, do we get resurrected?
[37:17] "Even our all ancestors before us?"
[37:18] Say: "Yes, you will be forcibly summoned."
[37:19] All it takes is one jolt, whereupon they stand up looking.
[37:20] They will say, "Misery to us; we now face the established Order."
[37:21] This is the day of decision that you used to reject.
[37:22] Summon the transgressors and their spouses and the false authorities they held in esteem and followed instead of
[37:23] serving God and herd them towards the path of hell.
[37:24] Stop them awhile and ask them:
[37:25] "Why do you not help one another?"
[37:26] On that day they will be totally subjugated.

[771] **Everything** in the universe operates consistently and in precision with God's laws. Everything, no matter how small or large knows its direction and has a determined result because it follows these laws in the System of God. See verses and footnotes 6:59; 6:132; 34:54; 37:166.
[772] **Beginning of life:** see verses and footnotes 3:59; 36:82.

LEADERS AND FOLLOWERS BLAME EACH OTHER

[37:27] They will come to each other, questioning and blaming one another.
[37:28] They will say to their leaders, "You used to come to us, in positions of power and authority, swearing that you spoke the truth."
[37:29] They will respond, "It is you who rejected this guidance.
[37:30] "We never had any power over you; it is you who were wicked.
[37:31] "We justly incurred our Sustainer's judgment and now we have to suffer.
[37:32] "We misled you, only because we were astray."
[37:33] Thus, together they will all suffer the retribution on that day of reckoning.
[37:34] This is how We punish the guilty.
[37:35] When they were told: "There is no authority to rank with the One God." they turned arrogant.
[37:36] They said, "Shall we abandon those whom we take as authorities for the sake of a crazy poet?"
[37:37] In fact, he brought the truth and confirmed the guidance brought by the messengers before him.
[37:38] Most assuredly, you will taste the most painful retribution.
[37:39] You are recompensed only for what you have done.

[37:40] Only those who serve God by following His guidance and are absolutely devoted to Him alone are protected.[773]
[37:41] They have deserved provisions that are reserved specifically for them.
[37:42] All kinds of nutrition. They will be honoured.
[37:43] In the gardens of bliss.
[37:44] On furnishings close to one another.
[37:45] Cups of pure drinks will be offered to them.
[37:46] Clear and delicious for the drinkers.
[37:47] Never polluted and never exhausted.
[37:48] With them will be wonderful companions.[774]
[37:49] Protected like acknowledged dignitaries.
[37:50] They will come to each other and confer with one another.
[37:51] One of them will say, "I used to have a friend.
[37:52] "He used to mock: 'Do you believe all this?'
[37:53] "'After we die and turn into dust and bones, do we get called to account?'"

[773] **Good deeds** strengthen our character and our Self, this shields us from any lasting harm. The torment and pain that weak people will go through in the coming life will not be suffered by people who do good works in this life.
[774] **These descriptions** are allegorical and are designed to appeal to the simple level of understanding. Who but God knows the real pleasures of the coming life?

[37:54] He will say, "Just take a look."
[37:55] When he looks, he will see his friend in the hearth of hell.
[37:56] He will go to him and say, "By God, you almost ruined me.
[37:57] "If it were not for my Sustainer's blessing, I would have been with you now.
[37:58] "Do you still believe that we die,
[37:59] "only the first death and then we never receive any recompense?"[775]
[37:60] Such is the greatest triumph.
[37:61] This is what every person should work for.
[37:62] Is this a better life or the tree of bitterness?
[37:63] We have rendered it as a punishment for the transgressors.
[37:64] It is a tree that grows in the hearth of hell.
[37:65] Its flowers look fearsome.
[37:66] They will eat from it until their bellies are filled up.
[37:67] Then they will follow it with a dreadful drink.
[37:68] Then they will return to their hellish state again.

FOLLOWING PARENTS BLINDLY A TRAGEDY

[37:69] Their parents were already astray.
[37:70] And in blind faith they followed in their footsteps.
[37:71] Most of the previous generations have strayed in the same manner.
[37:72] We did send to them warners.
[37:73] Note the consequences for those who have been warned.
[37:74] Only those who serve God and who absolutely follow His guidance are protected. [776]

NOAH SAVED FROM DISASTER

[37:75] Thus, Noah called upon Us and We were the best responders.
[37:76] We saved him and his family from the great disaster.
[37:77] We made him and his companions the survivors.
[37:78] And We preserved his history for subsequent generations.
[37:79] Peace be upon Noah among mankind.
[37:80] We thus reward the righteous.
[37:81] He is one of Our believing servants.
[37:82] We drowned all the others.

[775] **People** who progress to Heaven will be able to see their relatives and friends who ended up in hell without adverse consequences. In the life yet to come, anyone can move downward, but not upward beyond a certain limit. The limit is decided by one's degree of growth and development.
[776] **Following** your parents blindly is one of the greatest human tragedies. Not long after your birth, they decide your name, nationality, religion and sect. And you spend the rest of your life defending something you did not even choose. See verse 40:83.

ABRAHAM QUESTIONS HIS BELIEFS

[37:83] And the community of Abraham practised a religion.
[37:84] But he came to his Sustainer wholeheartedly.
[37:85]He said to his father and his people, "What are you worshipping?
[37:86] "Is it these fabricated gods instead of God, that you want?
[37:87] "Do you not think of the Sustainer of the universe?"
[37:88] He looked carefully at the stars.
[37:89] Then he gave up and said, "I am tired of this.
[37:90] They disappeared at dawn.
[37:91] He then turned on their stone idols, saying, "Would you like to eat?[777]
[37:92] "Why do you not speak?"
[37:93] He then broke them up.
[37:94] The elders went to him in a great rage.
[37:95] Abraham said, "How can you worship these idols that you have carved with your own hands?[778]
[37:96] "When God has created you and everything you make?"
[37:97] They said, "Let us build a great fire and throw him into it."
[37:98] They schemed against him, but We made them the losers.

ABRAHAM'S DREAM TO SACRIFICE HIS OWN SON

[37:99] Abraham said, "I am going to the One who Sustains me, He will guide me."
[37:100] "My Sustainer, grant me upright children."
[37:101] We gave him good news of a righteous child.
[37:102] When he grew old enough to work with him, he said, "My son, I saw in a dream that I am sacrificing you. What do you think?" He said, "O my father, do what you are commanded to do. You will find me, God willing, patient."[779]

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[777] **Worshipping** stone idols was a common trait of pagans in the past and even exists in modern times. See verses and footnotes 26:71 & 34:13; 37:125-128.

[778] **It is degrading** and an insult to an individual's intellect and self-respect to make an idol with his own hands then bow down to worship it as if it were a powerful deity. Even today there are those who touch and kiss stones out of reverence. For muslims this is an abhorrent and degrading act.

[779] **The idea** of sacrificing his own son transpired from Abraham's dream which he sincerely believed he should carry out. However, God did not command him to do this. God does not command regressive acts. Had it been God's command, Abraham would have been sure and would not have needed to ask his son's opinion. If we say that the dream was a vision from God, then the verses describing this incident conflict with other verses. For example the command not to kill your children [verse 6:151], no believer kills another believer [verse 4:92]. In verse 4:79 we are told that "Anything good that happens to you is from God and anything bad that happens to you is a result of your own work." Since for Abraham to sacrifice his son was a bad idea, it was not from God. Many religious cults in the past and even today have child sacrifice rituals. Anyone who speaks out against such barbaric acts can become more demonised than those who actually perform it. See verse 42:30.

[37:103] They both were in agreement and he put his son's forehead down to prepare him for sacrifice.
[37:104] We called him: "O Abraham.
[37:105] "You believed your dream, in sincerity," We thus reward the righteous.
[37:106] That was an exacting test indeed.
[37:107] We exchanged for him greatness in place of regression.
[37:108] And We preserved his history for subsequent generations.
[37:109] Peace be upon Abraham.
[37:110] We thus reward the righteous.
[37:111] He is one of Our believing servants.
[37:112] Then We gave him the good news about the birth of Isaac, to be one of the righteous messengers.
[37:113] We blessed him and Isaac. Among their descendants, some are righteous and others are clear transgressors.

MOSES, AARON AND ELIAS: HONOURED MESSENGERS

[37:114] We also set apart Moses and Aaron.
[37:115] We delivered them and their people from a great disaster.
[37:116] We supported them until they became successful.
[37:117] We gave both of them profound guidance.
[37:118] We guided them in the right path.
[37:119] We preserved their history for subsequent generations.
[37:120] Peace be upon Moses and Aaron.
[37:121] We thus reward the righteous.
[37:122] Both of them were among Our righteous servants.

[37:123] Elias was one of the messengers.
[37:124] He said to his people, "Would you not work righteousness?
[37:125] "Do you worship statues, instead of serving the supreme Creator?
[37:126] "God: your Sustainer and the Sustainer of your forefathers."
[37:127] They disbelieved him. Consequently, they were called to account.
[37:128] Only those who serve God and who absolutely follow His guidance are protected. [780]
[37:129] We preserved his history for subsequent generations.
[37:130] Peace be upon Elias.
[37:131] We thus reward the righteous.
[37:132] He was one of Our believing servants.

[780] **Idolatry** is not just about worshipping statues but is also about serving something or someone that is other than God as a more important objective in life. This could the excessive love for your nation (nationalism), obsessive admiration for a famous person, an extreme passion for a political cause or even devotion to a religion and its doctrines. See verses 34:13 & 68:37. See also 26:71.

LOT SAVED FROM CORRUPT PEOPLE

[37:133] Lot was one of the messengers.
[37:134] We saved him and all his family,
[37:135] But his wife was doomed when
[37:136] We annihilated all the others.
[37:137] You still pass by their ruins by day.
[37:138] And by night. Would you not then understand?

JONAH ABANDONED HIS MISSION

[37:139] Jonah was one of the messengers.
[37:140] He escaped on the loaded ship.
[37:141] He rebelled and thus he joined the losers.
[37:142] Consequently, a whale swallowed him and he was the one to blame.
[37:143] If it were not that he resorted to repentance and supplication,
[37:144] he would have stayed in its belly until the Day of Resurrection.[781]
[37:145] We had him thrown up into the desert, exhausted.
[37:146] We had grown there a tree of edible fruit for him.
[37:147] Then We sent him to a community of people that numbered a hundred thousand and more.
[37:148] They believed in the guidance that he brought and We let them enjoy this life.[782]

THE DISBELIEVERS CLAIM GOD PROCREATES

[37:149] Ask people if the One who Sustains you has daughters while they have sons.
[37:150] Did We create the malaika to be females? Did they witness that?
[37:151] Indeed, they grossly blaspheme when they say:
[37:152] "God has begotten a son." Indeed, they are liars.
[37:153] Did He choose daughters over sons?[783]
[37:154] What is wrong with your thinking?
[37:155] Why do you not take heed?
[37:156] Do you have any proof?
[37:157] Show Us your book, if you are truthful.
[37:158] They even invented a special relationship between Him and the invisible forces. These hidden ones themselves know that they are subservient.

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[781] **The End of the World** is when we 'die', and the Day of Resurrection is when we complete the transition to the next life and face the challenges it brings. Neither of these occurrences is a collective event for all mankind at one and the same time.

[782] **God's messengers** are human and as such have human failings. See verse and footnote 40:66.

[783] **Most men** around the world prefer sons, yet some have assigned daughters to God: offspring they would never want for themselves.

[37:159] God be glorified, far above their claims.
[37:160] Only those who serve God and who absolutely follow His guidance are protected.
[37:161] Indeed, you and those you serve.
[37:162] Cannot impose anything on Him.
[37:163] Only you will burn in a hell of your own making.

[37:164] Each malaika has a specific function and an explicit role:
[37:165] "We are the ones charged with arrangements of all things.
[37:166] We have duly glorified the One who sustains with our total obedience to His commands."[784]

BLINDLY FOLLOWING: A GREAT TRAGEDY

[37:167] They used to say,
[37:168] "Had we received the right guidance from our parents,
[37:169] "we would have served God and followed His guidance."
[37:170] But they rejected His guidance and they will surely find out.[785]
[37:171] Our decision is already decreed for Our servants the messengers.
[37:172] They will surely have the best assistance.
[37:173] Our servants are the ones who prosper.
[37:174] So disregard them for a while.
[37:175] Watch and wait with them; they too will watch and wait.
[37:176] Do they challenge Our retribution?
[37:177] When it hits them one day, it will be a miserable day, but they have been sufficiently warned.
[37:178] Disregard them for a while.
[37:179] Watch and wait with them. They too will watch and wait.
[37:180] Glory be to the One who sustains you, the great Sustainer, far above their claims.
[37:181] and peace be upon the messengers.[786]
[37:182] Praise be to God, Sustainer of the universe.

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[784] **Everything** works in a precise and ordered manner, whether it's smaller or greater than an atom - all operate according to the laws of God and the malaika are the energies and driving forces. See verse 37:1.

[785] **Following** your parents blindly is one of the greatest human tragedies. Not long after your birth, they decide your name, nationality, religion and sect. And you spend the rest of your life defending something you did not even choose. See verse 37:74.

[786] **Peace be upon the messengers:** Traditionally, to show respect, Muslims wrongly append '*Solle-Allahu alayhi wa-sallam*' on each mention of Muhammad's name believing this means "Peace be upon him." (acronyms: SAW or PBUH). When translated traditionally it wrongly means 'God sends His *prayer (blessings)* and peace on him. 'The correct meaning of the phrase is 'God confirms upon him His commitment *(solaa*) and bestows peace.' The correct way to convey peace is: *alayhi al-salam* meaning 'peace be upon him.' While not mandatory, this can be said for any of the messengers. See verses and footnotes 2:3; 2:125 and also 37: 79, 109, 120, 130.

Sura 38: S. (Saad)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[38:1] By the letter S and the Quran that contains the profound reminder.[787]
[38:2] Those who disbelieve this guidance have plunged into arrogance and defiance.
[38:3] Many a generation before them We annihilated. They called for help but this was in vain.
[38:4] They wondered that a warner should come to them, from among them. Those who rejected this guidance said, "A magician, a liar.
[38:5] "Does he want to make our gods into the One God? This is really an astounding thought."
[38:6] The leaders announced, "Go and remain loyal in worshipping your gods. This is what is desired.
[38:7] "We never heard of this in the religion of our fathers. This is a lie.
[38:8] "Why did a reminder come down to him from among us?" Indeed, they are doubtful of My reminder to them. Indeed, they have not yet tasted My retribution.
[38:9] Do they own the treasures of mercy from your Sustainer, the Almighty, the grantor of all things?
[38:10] Do they possess the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and everything between them? Then let them exalt themselves.
[38:11] Instead, whatever forces they can muster even if all their parties banded together will be defeated.
[38:12] Rejecting Our guidance before them were the people of Noah, Aad and the powerful Firawn.
[38:13] Also, Thamoud, the people of Lot, the dwellers of the woods of Midyan: those were the antagonists against Our System.
[38:14] Each of them rejected the messengers and thus My retribution was inevitable.
[38:15] There was a single blow from which they never recovered.
[38:16] They challenged the doom: "Our Sustainer, why do you not rush the reckoning for us, before the Day of Reckoning?"

DAVID'S FAIR & JUST JUDGEMENT

[38:17] Be patient in the face of their utterances and remember Our servant David, the capable. He was obedient.
[38:18] We committed the mountains as resourceful assets for him, increasing his esteem night and day.
[38:19] Also the birds were committed as possessions for him, all were valuable to his needs.

[787] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verse and footnote 2:185.

[38:20] We strengthened his rule and endowed him with wisdom and good judgment.
[38:21] Have you received news of the feuding men who sneaked into his private chamber?
[38:22] When they entered his room, he was startled. They said, "Have no fear. We are only arguing with one another and we are seeking your fair judgment. Do not wrong us; guide us in the right path.
[38:23] "This brother of mine owns ninety nine sheep, while I own one sheep. He wants to mix my sheep with his and continues to pressure me."
[38:24] David said, "He is being unfair to you by asking to combine your sheep with his. Most people who merge their properties treat each other unfairly, except those who believe and work righteousness, and these are so few." Afterwards, David wondered if he made the right judgment. He thought that God was testing him. He then implored his Sustainer for protection and felt humbled by His approval.[788]
[38:25] We protected him in this matter. We have granted him a position of honour with Us and a beautiful abode.
[38:26] O David, We have made you a ruler on earth. Therefore, you shall judge among your people equitably and do not follow your personal opinion, lest it diverts you from the way of God. Surely, those who stray off the way of God incur severe retribution for not keeping in mind their accountability to God.[789]
[38:27] We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them in vain. Such is the thinking of those who reject this guidance. Therefore, misery to those who disbelieve. They will suffer in a hell of their own making.
[38:28] Shall We treat those who believe and lead a righteous life as We treat those who commit corruption on earth? Shall We treat the righteous as We treat the criminals?

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[788] **In this clear example** David's extreme care to render the correct judgment caused him to seek protection in order to avoid a wrong decision. This apparently simple story, like many other parables in the Quran, projects a far more important picture than originally appears. Here we are shown how the powerful attempt to usurp the property of the weak. This is about economic injustice. Whether it's governments, corporations or families, greed has the effect of depriving the vulnerable of their rights and subjecting them to exploitations of the worst kind. To possess and devour property belonging to another is a gross offence. See verses 2:220; 4:29-30; 10:11; 18:32.

[789] **David, God's messenger** is commanded not to follow his personal opinion but keep within God's Laws - his final accountability is to God and God alone. Opinion is the lowest form of human knowledge: it requires no understanding or accountability. The highest form of knowledge is divinely revealed guidance, the Quran - there is no other book that provides better guidance. This is because to fulfil a profound purpose, the development of our Self, the true meaning of life, we must recognise that it is God and not our ego that is the ultimate authority. See verse 4:117. **Opinion** is no substitute for the truth and, as mentioned many times in the Quran, leads people adrift. See verses 5:77; 6:56; 7:176; 10:36; 16:116; 20:16; 28:50; 30:29; 34:53; 47:14; 49:2; 54:3 and 31:20.

[38:29] This is a guidance that We reveal to you that is sanctified, so that you may reflect on its counsel. Those who possess intelligence will take heed.

SOLOMON CHOOSES TO SERVE GOD ALONE

[38:30] To David We granted a son, Solomon, a good and obedient servant.
[38:31] One day he became preoccupied with his beautiful horses and was with them until nightfall.
[38:32] He then said, "I enjoy these worldly things more than I enjoy serving my Sustainer, and then he sent his horses away behind a barrier.
[38:33] "Bring them back." He said this in order to bid them a last farewell; he caressed their legs and their necks.
[38:34] We thus put Solomon to the test. We blessed him with vast material wealth, despite this he was steadfast and devoted to God.
[38:35] He said, "My Sustainer, protect me and grant me a leadership never attained by anyone else. You are the One who grants all things."
[38:36] We answered his supplication and gave him knowledge to control the winds, pouring rain wherever he wanted.
[38:37] And he brought under control even the disruptive people, building and diving for him.
[38:38] Others too were placed at his disposal.
[38:39] "These are Our provisions to you; you may impart them generously without limits or withhold them if you please."
[38:40] He has deserved an honourable position with Us and a wonderful abode.

JOB FACES GREAT HARDSHIP

[38:41] Remember Our servant Job: he called upon his Sustainer, "Through my egotistic Self I have been afflicted with hardship and pain."[790]
[38:42] He was inspired to strike the ground with his foot and a water spring gave him a refreshing drink."
[38:43] Then We restored his family for him; twice as many. Such is Our mercy, a reminder for those who possess intelligence.
[38:44] "Now, you shall travel the land and teach this guidance to fulfil your promise." We found him steadfast and uncomplaining, a good servant, wholeheartedly devoted.

[790] **Job and Solomon** represent both ends of the test spectrum for Self development, adversity and prosperity. We are put to the test through wealth, health or lack of them, to see if we remain steadfast and follow the guidance to realise our potential by following God's guidance under all circumstances by facing the challenges before us. See verses 40:60; 40:66. **Challenges of life:** see verses 3:97; 3:195; 4:100.

OTHER MESSENGERS

[38:45] Remember also Our servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They were resourceful and possessed discerning insight.
[38:46] We bestowed upon them a great blessing, and an awareness of the Hereafter.
[38:47] They were chosen to be set above and apart from others because they were among the most righteous.
[38:48] Keep in mind the history of Ismail, Elisha and Zul-Kifl, who were among the most righteous.

THE BENEFACTORS OF HUMANITY

[38:49] This is a reminder. The righteous have use it as a guide to protect themselves from lasting harm and have deserved a wonderful destination.
[38:50] The gardens of peace and security will open up their gates for them.
[38:51] Relaxing therein, they will have many kinds of fruits and drinks.
[38:52] They will enjoy the company of wonderful companions.
[38:53] This is what you have deserved for your good deeds, your share when all has been accounted for.
[38:54] Our provisions are inexhaustible.

THE LOSERS FEUD WITH ONE ANOTHER

[38:55] As for the transgressors, they have incurred a miserable future.
[38:56] They are committed to hell, where they burn; what a miserable life.
[38:57] What they taste therein will be bitter drinks and bitter food.
[38:58] And much more of the same kind.
[38:59] Then there is a group that falls into a state of hell and they will not be welcomed. They have deserved to suffer in a hell of their own solitude, burning in their own wickedness.
[38:60] These newcomers will get this response, "Nor are you welcomed here. You are the ones who preceded us and misled us. Therefore, suffer a worse misery than this awful end."
[38:61] They will also say, "Our Sustainer, these are the ones who led us into this, double the retribution of hellfire for them."
[38:62] They will say, "How come we do not see here people we used to count among the misled?
[38:63] "We used to disparage them and we used to turn our eyes away from them."
[38:64] This is a determined fact: the people of hell will feud with one another.
[38:65] Say: "I warn you; do not set up any other authority to rival or equal God, the One, the Supreme.
[38:66] "The Sustainer of the heavens and the earth and everything between them, the Almighty and the Protector."
[38:67] Say: "Here is some awesome news.

[38:68] "That you are totally oblivious to:
[38:69] "I have no knowledge that the heavenly society ever feuded.
[38:70] "I am inspired that my sole mission is to deliver the warnings to you."
[38:71] Your Sustainer said to the malaika, "I am creating a human being from clay.[791]
[38:72] "Once I design him and direct him from My Ruh, you shall yield yourself to him."[792]
[38:73] The malaika yielded to him, all of them,
[38:74] except Iblees. The egotistic Self refused and was too arrogant, unappreciative.[793]
[38:75] He said, "Iblees, what prevented you from consenting to what I designed? Are you too arrogant? Have you rebelled?"
[38:76] He said, "I am better than he. I am created with fiery desires and he emerges from clay."
[38:77] He said, "Therefore, you must be exiled and you will be banished."
[38:78] "You have incurred My condemnation until the time of accountability."
[38:79] He said, "My Sustainer, respite me during the established Order."
[38:80] He said, "You are respited."
[38:81] "Until the appointed time."
[38:82] He said, "I swear by Your ordinance that I will send them all astray."
[38:83] "Except those who serve You and are devoted absolutely to You alone."
[38:84] God said, "This is the truth and it is only the truth that I speak:
[38:85] Consistent with My ordinance, a hell of your own making will envelope you and all those who follow you."

[38:86] Say: "I do not ask you for any money and I am not an imposter.
[38:87] This is a guidance and a reminder for mankind.
[38:88] And you will certainly find out in time."

[791] **Human** beings created from clay. See verses and footnotes 3:59; 36:80-82.
[792] **Ruh** is the directive energy *from* God, but not *of* God. See verse 4:171. Everything in the heavens and the earth in the service of mankind. See verse and footnote 31:20.
[793] **Egotistic/ Arrogant:** (Arabic: *takabbar.* Root K'B'R). See verse and footnote 7:75. See also verses and footnotes 6:19; 9:72; 29:45.

Sura 39: The Throngs (Al-Zumar)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[39:1] This is a revealed guidance from God the Almighty, the Wise.
[39:2] We sent down to you this guidance truthfully. You shall serve God, devoting your life to Him alone and only according to His System.
[39:3] Absolutely, this Deen shall become the fabric of your life directed by guidance from God. To those who set up others as protecting friends to rank with Him, say: "We idolise and follow them only to bring us closer to God, for they are mediators" God will judge them regarding their disputes. God does not guide such liars, disbelievers.[794]
[39:4] If God wanted to have a son, He could have chosen whomever He willed from among His creations. Be He glorified. He is God, the One, the Supreme.
[39:5] He created the heavens and the earth truthfully. He merges the night into the day and merges the day into the night. He committed the sun and the moon, each running for a finite period. Absolutely, He is the Almighty, the Protector.
[39:6] He created you from one entity and also from it your mate. He sent down to you many kinds of livestock. He creates you in your mothers' wombs, developing you in three tiers of darkness. Such is God your Sustainer. To Him belongs all sovereignty. There is no authority to rank with Him. How could you deviate?

THE ASTUTE FOLLOW THIS GUIDANCE

[39:7] If you disbelieve in this guidance, God does not need anyone. But He dislikes to see His servants unappreciative and misguided. If you decide to be appreciative, He is satisfied for you. No Self bears the wrongs of any other Self. Ultimately, to your Sustainer is your return, He will then inform you of everything you have done. He is fully aware of your innermost thoughts.
[39:8] When the human being is afflicted, he implores his Sustainer, sincerely devoted to Him. But when relieved of his pain, he forgets his affliction, follows authorities that rival God and diverts others from His path. Say: "Enjoy your disbelief temporarily. You have incurred the hellfire of your own making."
[39:9] Is it not better to be one of those who contemplate in the night, in submission and having awareness of the life yet to come and seeking the

[794] **Authority** that people assign to equal God can be: saints, priests, preachers, politicians, leaders and even lifeless things like 'lucky' stones, rabbits' feet, 'magic' rings etc. Following anyone or serving anything in contradiction to God's guidance is shirk: treason and a crime. See verses 10:28-30; 46:28. See also 36:74.

mercy of your Sustainer? Say: "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" Only those who possess intelligence take heed.
[39:10] Say to My servants who believed, "You shall reverence your Sustainer." For those who worked righteousness in this world, a good reward awaits you. God's earth is spacious and those who steadfastly persevere will receive their recompense generously, without limits.

DON'T LOSE FOCUS - SERVE IN GOD'S SYSTEM

[39:11] Say: "I have been commanded to serve God, devoting my way of life according to His Deen: God's system.
[39:12] "And I was commanded to be one of the first to submit to His guidance."
[39:13] Say: "I fear, if I disobey my Sustainer, the retribution of an overwhelming day."
[39:14] Say: "God is the only one I serve, devoting my way of life absolutely in harmony with His System alone."
[39:15] "Therefore, serve whatever you wish besides Him." Say: "The real losers are those who displace their focus and lose their Self and their families on the day when we are held accountable." Most certainly, this is the real loss.
[39:16] They will be enveloped in an inferno of their own making. God thus alerts His servants: O My servants, you shall fulfil your duty to Me by following this guidance.
[39:17] As for those who discard the worship of all idols and serving fabricated authorities and devote themselves totally to the System of God, they have deserved happiness. Give good news to My servants.
[39:18] Most excellent are the people who listen and consider all viewpoints, then follow the straight and balanced path. These are the ones who are guided, consistent with God's ordinance; these are the ones who possess intelligence.
[39:19] With regard to those who deserve retribution, can you save those who are already paving their way to a hell of their own making?
[39:20] As for those who reverence their Sustainer, they will have abodes of excellence constructed for them, with flowing streams. This is God's promise and God never breaks His promise.
[39:21] Do you not see that God sends down from the sky water, then places it into underground sources, then produces with it plants of various colours, then they grow until they turn yellow, then He turns them dry? Those who possess intelligence reflect on these signs.
[39:22] If God renders one's heart content with submission to His guidance, he will be following a light from his Sustainer. Therefore, misery to those whose hearts are hardened against God's message; they have gone far astray.

[39:23] God has revealed in here the best Hadith; a consistent message, balanced and reliable, in the form of a book, reiterating and reminding. Those who understand it tremble in awe of their Sustainer, but their hearts become tranquil when they hear of the blessings in God's guidance. Such is God's guidance. God bestows guidance on those whose works are constant with His ordinance. As for those who move astray, do so in accordance with God's ordinance, and no-one can guide them.[795]

[39:24] What is better than saving one's face from the terrible retribution on the Day of Resurrection? The transgressors will be told, "Taste the consequences of what you earned."
[39:25] Others before them have disbelieved and consequently the retribution afflicted them from whence they never expected.
[39:26] God has condemned them to humiliation in this life and the retribution in the Hereafter will be far greater, if they only knew.

[39:27] We have cited for mankind every kind of examples in this Quran, that they may take heed.
[39:28] An Arabic Quran without any crookedness or ambiguity, that they may take heed and become successful.
[39:29] God cites the example of a man who deals with conflicting authorities, compared to a man who accepts only one consistent source. Are they the same? Praise be to God; most of them do not know.[796]
[39:30] You will surely die, just like they will die.
[39:31] On the Day of Resurrection you people will feud with one another before your Sustainer.

[795] **Hadith:** message. The Quran is the best hadith (Arabic: *ehsan-ul-hadith*) a consistent source of balanced guidance. The word '*ehsan*' means to balance or compensate. The laws and values in the Quran make life equitable by applying justice and fairness in the community: thus creating a balanced society. Ehsan is not a charitable act but a duty to compensate for others' deficiencies, a duty to be fulfilled by all individuals. The Quran sets out the platform to do this. In verse 31:6 In this verse God also warns of profane hadith, that conflicts with Quranic teachings, causes fear and turmoil and is even inconsistent with itself. The fabricated hadith also misguides people and places untold suffering on people deluded enough to follow it, thinking it's from God or his messenger. Here, God clearly defines the best message and guidance to balance society, that people should follow instead of the fabricated hadith. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 6:19; 67:6-11; 68:36-44. **Social welfare** and Citizen's income verse 21:112. Equity and equality verse 10:109.
[796] **Those who accept** biased, uncertain or conflicting information from different sources have a very weak foundation, but guidance from a single, consistent and credible source provides the strongest base for any individual, society or nation. Such is the Quranic guidance: permanent laws and values to underpin any social system for the benefit of all individuals and communities.

[39:32] Who is more evil than one who attributes lies to God, while disbelieving in the truth that has come to him? Is hell not a just punishment for the disbelievers?
[39:33] As for those who promote the truth and believe in it, they are the righteous.
[39:34] They will get everything they wish for at their Sustainer. Such is the reward for the righteous.
[39:35] God remits their wrongful conduct and rewards them generously for their good works.

DO NOT BE FRIGHTENED BY FALSE AUTHORITIES

[39:36] Is God not sufficient for His servants? They frighten you with the fabricated authorities they set up beside Him. Whoever moves astray, consistent with God's ordinance, nothing can guide him.[797]
[39:37] And whoever is guided in accordance with God's System, nothing can draw him astray. Is God not the Almighty punisher?

BELIEF WITHOUT ACTION - ROAD TO HELL

[39:38] If you ask them, "Who created the heavens and the earth?" They will say, "God." Say: "Why then do you set up authorities to rival or equal God? If God willed any adversity for me, can they relieve such an adversity? And if He willed a blessing for me, can they prevent such a blessing?" Say: "God is sufficient for me." In Him those who have conviction shall trust.[798]
[39:39] Say: "O my people, do your best and I will do my best; you will surely find out.
[39:40] "You will find out who has incurred shameful punishment and has deserved an eternal retribution."
[39:41] We have revealed this guidance through you for all the people, truthfully. Then, whoever is guided is guided for his own good and whoever goes astray, goes astray to his own detriment. You are not their advocate.
[39:42] God puts each Self to death when the end of this life comes and sometimes during the period of sleep. Thus, He takes some back during their sleep while others are allowed to continue living until their term also comes to an end. This should provide lessons for people who reflect.

INTERCESSION: UNDESERVED FAVOURITISM

[39:43] Have they invented intercessors to mediate between them and God? Say: "What if they do not possess any power nor understanding?"[799]

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[797] **Is God not enough?** Is His guidance not enough? Is this why people need other authorities and other books of guidance? See verses 6:114; 39:23; 39:29.
[798] **Those who** profess to believe in the One God can actually be mushrik. See verse: 12:106.
[799] **A person** who has put in an honest hard day's work looks forward to his wages, not charity, such as a dishonest or workshy person may do. Those who do good seek a just reward from God.

[39:44] Say: "All intercession belongs to God." To Him belongs all sovereignty of the heavens and the earth then to Him you will be returned.

DON'T SET UP AUTHORITIES TO EQUAL GOD

[39:45] When God alone is advocated, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shrink with aversion. But when others are mentioned beside Him, they rejoice.[800]

[39:46] Proclaim: "Our God, initiator of the heavens and the earth, knower of all secrets and declarations, You are the only One who judges among Your servants regarding their disputes."

[39:47] If those who transgressed owned everything on earth, even twice as much, they would readily give it up to avoid the terrible punishment on the Day of Reckoning. They will be shown by God what they never expected.

[39:48] The wrong deeds and criminal works they had earned will be shown to them and the very things they used to mock will come back to haunt them.

ALL CRIMES ARE PUNISHED - THERE IS NO ESCAPE

[39:49] When the human is touched by adversity, he implores Us, but as soon as We bestow a blessing upon him, he says, "I attained this because of my ingenuity." Indeed, this is only a test, but most of them do not know.

[39:50] Those before them have said the same things and their earnings did not help them in the least.

[39:51] They suffered the consequences of their evil works. Similarly, the transgressors among the present generation will suffer the consequences of their crimes; they cannot escape.[801]

[39:52] Do they not realise that God is the One who increases your provisions in accordance with his ordinance and withholds them in accordance with His ordinance? These are lessons for people who believe.

It is the criminal who seeks pity and intercession by an intermediary, other than this there is no hope for him. But God clearly repels intercession because it is good deeds that deserve a good future. Intercession is undeserved favouritism. See verses and footnotes 2:254; 19:87; 39:10.

[800] **God alone** is supreme, without anyone to rank with Him. Yet people insist on attaching the names of others beside Him as if they had a share of His sovereignty. This may be the attaching of a name beside His, or following doctrines attributed to Him - as if it were authorised by Him. When God alone is mentioned they become averse, when their idol (name of a messenger, saint, leader etc.) is attached alongside, they become satisfied. See also verse 40:12. Serve God alone and follow Quran alone. See verses 7.70; 9:1-10; 63:1. See verse and footnote 17:46.

[801] **An act** that is regressive to one's own Self is a crime. Every wrongful act is a crime of one description and level or another. See verse and footnote 6:123.

DEVELOP YOUR SELF BEFORE DEATH APPROACHES

[39:53] Proclaim: "My servants who exceed the limits of guidance never need despair of God's mercy for God provides protection from all wrongful actions. He is the Protector, Most Merciful."

[39:54] You shall obey your Sustainer and submit to Him totally, before the period of respite has lapsed and retribution overtakes you, then you cannot be helped.

[39:55] And follow the best path that is pointed out for you by your Sustainer, before the retribution overtakes you suddenly when you least expect it.

[39:56] Lest a Self may say, "How sorry I am for disregarding God's guidance. I was certainly one of those who scorned it."

[39:57] Or say, "Had God guided me, I would have been with the righteous."

[39:58] Or say, when it sees the retribution, "If I get another chance, I will work righteousness."

[39:59] Yes indeed, you did get enough opportunities. My signs came to you, but you rejected them, turned arrogant and became a rejecter of My guidance.

[39:60] On the Day when you are held accountable, you will see the faces of those who lied about God covered with misery. Is hell not the right punishment for the arrogant ones?

[39:61] Those who have maintained righteousness are protected by their good deeds in accordance with God's ordinance. He will reward them: no harm will touch them nor will they grieve.

[39:62] God is the creator of all things and He is in full control of all things.

[39:63] To Him belongs all knowledge in the heavens and the earth and those who reject God's revealed guidance are the real losers.

[39:64] Say: "Is it other than God you exhort me to serve and are you ignorant of the truth?"

GREATNESS OF GOD

SHIRK: TREACHERY NULLIFIES ALL WORKS

[39:65] It has been revealed to you and to those before you that if you ever set up any authority to equal or rival God, all your works will be nullified and you will indeed be with the losers.

[39:66] Therefore, you shall serve God and be appreciative.

[39:67] They can never fathom the magnitude of God. The whole earth is within His grasp on the Day of Accountability. In fact, to Him the universes are no more than a handful. Be He glorified. He is much too high and above needing any partners.[802]

[802] **These are** of course allegorical terms as God is above any measurement, shape and size. He is far beyond what we can imagine, He is simply God. See verses and footnotes 6:19; 112:1-4.

EVERY SELF RECEIVES ITS RECOMPENSE

[39:68] The signal will be given, whereupon everyone in the heavens and the earth will become insentient except those who will be aware of the events, as ordained by God. Another signal, whereupon they will arise and become aware of what is taking place.

[39:69] Then the earth will shine with the light of its Sustainer. The record will be proclaimed and the messengers and the witnesses will come forth. Everyone will be judged equitably without the least injustice.

[39:70] Every Self will receive its recompense for whatever it did, for God is fully aware of everything you have done.

THOSE WHO REJECT THIS GUIDANCE FACE RETRIBUTION

[39:71] Those who rejected God's guidance will follow each other into hell in throngs. When they get to it and its gates are opened, its guardians will say, "Did you not receive messengers from among you who recited to you the revealed guidance of your Sustainer and warned you about meeting this day?" They will answer, "Yes indeed." But the word `retribution' was already marked out on the disbelievers.

[39:72] It will be said, "Enter the gates of hell, wherein you abide forever." What a miserable end for the arrogant.

GOD'S PROMISE REALISED

[39:73] Those who fulfilled their duty to their Sustainer will be welcomed into a state of peace and security. When they get to it and its gates are opened, its guards will say, "Salamun Alaikum: Peace be upon you; you are victorious in attaining this. Therefore, you abide herein forever." [803]

[39:74] They will say, "Praise be to God, who fulfilled His promise to us and made us inherit the earth, enjoying this paradise as we please." What a beautiful recompense for those who did good works.

[39:75] You will see the malaika, glorifying and praising their Sustainer. After the equitable judgment is issued to all, it will be proclaimed: "Praise be to God, Sustainer of the universe."

[803] **Peace be upon you.** (Arabic: *salamun alaikum*). Greeting approved by God. See verse and footnote 6:54.

Sura 40: The Protector (Ghaffar)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[40:1] H. M.
[40:2] The revelation of this guidance is from God, the Almighty, and he is the one aware of all things.
[40:3] The Protector from all wrongful deeds, acceptor of repentance, strict in enforcing retribution and possessor of all power. There is no other authority to rank with Him. To Him is the ultimate return.
[40:4] No one argues against God's revelations except those who reject this guidance. Do not be impressed by their apparent accomplishments.
[40:5] Disbelieving before them were the people of Noah and many other antagonists after them. Many a community persecuted their messenger to neutralise his efforts. And they argued with falsehood to defeat the truth. Consequently, I punished them. How terrible was My retribution!
[40:6] Thus, the judgment of your Sustainer is already stamped upon those who disbelieve, that they are the dwellers of a hell of their own making.
[40:7] Those who serve in God's domain and all those around it glorify and praise their Sustainer and believe in Him. And they ask protection for those who believe: "Our Sustainer, Your mercy and Your knowledge encompass all things. Protect those who repent and follow Your path and spare them the retribution of hell.
[40:8] "Our Sustainer admit them into the gardens of peace that You promised for them and for the righteous among their parents, spouses and children. You are the Almighty, Most Wise.
[40:9] "And protect them from falling in error and wrongful deeds. Whomever You protect from doing wrong, on that day has attained mercy from You. This is the greatest triumph."

DISBELIEVERS CONFESS THEIR TREACHERY

[40:10] Those who disbelieve will be told, "God's abhorrence towards you is even greater than your own abhorrence towards yourselves. For you were invited to believe in the guidance, but you chose to reject it."
[40:11] They will say, "Our Sustainer, you have put us to death twice and You gave us two lives. Now we have confessed our crimes, is there any way out?"

DISBELIEVERS: JUDGEMENT PASSED

[40:12] This is because when God alone was advocated you disbelieved, but when others were mentioned beside Him, you believed. Therefore, God's judgment has been issued; He is the Most High, the Great.[804]

[804] **Many profess** to believe in God but also insist on additionally following rules, edicts, doctrines and laws that contradict the guidance in the Quran from authorities other than God, such as priests,

[40:13] He is the One who continuously shows you His proofs and sends down to you from the sky provisions. Only those who turn to him will be able to understand.
[40:14] Therefore, you shall devote your service absolutely to God's System: Deen-Islam, even if the disbelievers dislike it.
[40:15] God, the possessor of the highest ranks and ruler of the entire dominion, sends inspiration bearing His commands to whomever He chooses from among His servants, to warn about the Day of Accountability.
[40:16] That is the day when everyone will be completely exposed. No one will be able to hide anything from God. To whom belongs all sovereignty on that day? To God, the One and the Supreme.
[40:17] On that day, every Self will be paid for whatever it had earned. There will be no injustice on that day. God is most efficient in reckoning.
[40:18] Warn them about the imminent day, when the hearts will be terrified and many will be remorseful. The transgressors will have no friend or an intercessor to speak on their behalf.
[40:19] He is fully aware of what the eyes cannot see and everything that the mind conceals.
[40:20] God judges equitably, while the fabricated authorities they implore beside Him cannot judge anything. God is the One who is the Hearer and the Seer of all things.
[40:21] Did they not travel the earth and note the consequences for those before them? They used to be stronger than them and more productive on earth. But God punished them for their crimes and nothing could protect them from God.
[40:22] That is because the messengers went to them with clear signs, but they rejected the guidance. Consequently, God punished them. He is Mighty, strict in enforcing retribution.

MOSES AND FIRAWN

[40:23] We sent Moses with Our signs and a profound authority.
[40:24] To Firawn, Haman and Qaroon. But they said, "A magician; a liar."
[40:25] And when he showed them the truth from Us, they said, "Kill the sons of those who believed with him and enslave their daughters." Thus, the scheming of the disbelievers is always wicked.
[40:26] Firawn said, "Let me kill Moses and let him implore his Sustainer. I worry lest he corrupts our deen; our way of life, or spreads evil throughout the land."[805]

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politicians etc. This is *shirk* and conflicts with fulfilling your duty to God alone. We can only follow that which is within the parameters of Quranic permanent values and laws. People who insist on following other guidance (i.e. other authorities) than the Quran are condemned. Serve God alone and follow the Quran alone. See verses and footnotes 10:31; 12:106; 17:46; 39:45; 68:38.

[805] **Most people** follow a deen, a system of sorts, not a system such as the Deen-Islam. No doubt Firawn's people had their own system, a religion of some kind. There is a vast difference between man's system and God's System, the Quranic social order: the Deen-Islam. See verse 3:85.

[40:27] Moses said, "I seek refuge in my Sustainer and your Sustainer, from every arrogant one who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning."
[40:28] A believing man among Firawn's people, who was concealing his belief, said, "How can you kill a man just for saying, `My Sustainer is God,' and he has shown you clear signs from your Sustainer? If he is a liar, then he will suffer, but if he is truthful you benefit from his promises and the guidance he brings. Surely, God does not guide any transgressor and liar.
[40:29] "O my people, today you rule and have power. But who will help us against God's judgment, should it come to us?" Firawn said, "You are to follow only what I see fit; Only I will guide you in the right path."
[40:30] The one who believed said, "O my people, I fear for you the same fate as the previous opponents.
[40:31] "The enemies of Noah and Aad, Thamoud and others who came after them. God does not wish any injustice for any people.
[40:32] "O my people, I fear for you the Day of Reckoning.
[40:33] "That is the day when you may wish to turn around and flee. But nothing will then protect you from God. Whoever moves astray according to God's ordinance, no one can guide him."
[40:34] Joseph had come to you before that with clear revelations, but you continued to doubt his message. Then, when he died you said, "God will not send any other messenger after him" Those who are transgressors and the doubtful move astray, consistent with God's ordinance.
[40:35] They argue against God's revealed guidance, without any basis. This is a trait that is most abhorred by God and by those who believe. The hearts of every arrogant tyrant are thus sealed, consistent with God's ordinance.

[40:36] Firawn said, "O Haman, build for me a high tower, that I may reach out and see for myself.
[40:37] "I want to reach the heaven and take a look at the god of Moses. I believe he is a liar." Thus the evil works of Firawn seemed good in his eyes and thus he was diverted from following the right path. Firawn's scheming was truly evil and ended in ruin.

A BELIEVER TRIES TO PERSUADE OTHERS TO FOLLOW

[40:38] The one who believed said, "O my people, follow me and I will guide you in the right way.
[40:39] "O my people, this first life is a temporary illusion while the Hereafter is the eternal abode."
[40:40] Whoever commits a wrong is punished for just that and whoever works righteousness, male or female, while believing will enter a state of peace and security wherein they receive provisions without any limits.

[40:41] "O my people, while I invite you to be saved, you invite me to the hellfire.
[40:42] "You invite me to be unappreciative of God and to set up beside Him authorities that I do not recognise. I am inviting you to the Almighty, the Protector.
[40:43] "There is no doubt that what you invite me to do has no basis in this world, nor in the Hereafter, and that our ultimate return is to God and that the transgressors have incurred the hellfire.
[40:44] "One day you will remember what I am telling you now. I leave the judgment of this matter to God. God is the One who has insight to everything that you do".
[40:45] God then protected him from their evil schemes, while the people of Firawn incurred a painful retribution.
[40:46] The fiery torment will be shown to them day and night and on the Day of Resurrection: "Admit Firawn's people into the terrible retribution."
[40:47] As they confront each other in the inferno of their deeds, the supporters will say to their arrogant leaders, "We used to be your followers, can you spare us any part of this hell?"[806]
[40:48] The haughty leaders will say, "We are all in this together. God has judged these people."
[40:49] Those in the hellfire will say to the guardians of hell, "Call upon your Sustainer to reduce the retribution for us, even for one day."
[40:50] The guardians will ask, "Did you not receive messengers who delivered to you clear guidance?" They will reply, "Yes we did." The guardians will reply, "Then implore as much as you wish. The imploring of those who rejected the guidance is always in vain."
[40:51] Most assuredly, We will give victory to Our messengers and to those who believe in this guidance, both in this world and on the day when you witness your accountability.
[40:52] On that day the apologies of the ones who rejected this guidance will be of no benefit. The disbelievers have incurred condemnation, they have incurred a terrible ending.

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[806] **Confront,** challenge, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). *Hajj-i-fiNaar*: In traditional translations 'hajj' is wrongly translated as pilgrimage, and in some verses as dispute or argue [e.g. verse 40:47]. According to the root structure of the Arabic language *hajj* means 'challenge or confront'. If the word 'hajj' means 'pilgrimage', then this verse 40:47, would read: 'making a pilgrimage to the fire' instead of "confront each other in the inferno...". Other verses also negate that idea that hajj means pilgrimage. Those condemned to hell confront each other, especially the followers who plead with those who led them, to now save them from this punishment. But judgement has been passed. Note that the Quran does not state that these companions 'argued in the fire' but that they 'confronted' each other. See verse and footnote: 2:76 & 42:16. For the word argue, dispute and debate: (Arabic: *jadal*. Root: J'D'L). See verses and footnotes 2:196-199; 20:15; 94:3-8.

LESSONS FROM HISTORY

[40:53] We gave Moses the guidance and made the Children of Israel inherit the scripture.
[40:54] Their history is a lesson and a reminder for those who possess intelligence.
[40:55] Therefore be patient, for God's promise is true, and ask protection for your wrongdoings and glorify and praise your Sustainer during the night and during the day.
[40:56] Surely, those who argue against God's revelations without evidence are exposing an arrogance that is hidden inside their hearts; and aims they can never attain. Therefore, seek refuge in God. He is the Hearer and the One who sees all things.

THE UNIVERSE: A BREATH-TAKING CREATION

[40:57] The creation of the heavens and the earth is even more breath-taking than the creation of the human being, but most people do not know.
[40:58] Not equal are the apathetic blind and the insightful seer. Nor are those who believe and work righteousness equal to the criminals who do wrong. Rarely do you take heed.
[40:59] Most certainly the End: the Day of Reckoning, is coming, no doubt about it, but most people do not believe.

[40:60] Your Sustainer says, "Call Me and I will respond to you. Surely, those who are too arrogant to serve Me will enter a state of hell, even while protesting their innocence".
[40:61] God is the One who designed the night so you can rest, and the day lighted. God bestows many blessings upon mankind but most people are not thankful.
[40:62] Such is God, the One who sustains you, the creator of all things. There is no authority to rank with Him. How could you deviate?
[40:63] Deviating are those who disregard God's revelations.
[40:64] God is the One who rendered the earth habitable for you and the sky a formidable structure and He designed you, and designed you excellent. He is the One who provides you with good provisions. Such is God your Sustainer. Most Exalted is God, Sustainer of the universe.[807]

[807] **God designed** the human being perfect, therefore to remove any part of the body as a religious rite, such as circumcision of the male foreskin or the removal of the inner/outer labia or the clitoris glans in the female, is without foundation. The actual procedure depends on the ethnic group. In some cultures this is a traditional ritual and in the case of females this genital mutilation (FGM) causes severe health problems. This is performed to desensitise the girl sexually. The male circumcision ritual is borrowed from the Jewish traditions with the exception of the *metsitzah b'peh*. This is where the mohel (a Jew trained in the practice of *brit milah* - circumcision) puts the freshly sliced genitals of the baby into his mouth so that the 'holy soul' may enter the child. It is said in

[40:65] He is the Living, there is no authority to rank with Him. You shall serve Him alone, following this guidance of His System, and devoting your life absolutely to Him alone. Praise be to God, Sustainer of the universe.

MESSENGER STOPPED FROM WORSHIPPING IDOLS

[40:66] Say: "I have been stopped from worshipping the idols you serve beside God. When the clear revelations came to me from my Sustainer, I was commanded to submit to the One who sustains the universe."[808]
[40:67] He is the One who initiated you from clay, and subsequently from a tiny drop, then from a hanging embryo, then He brings you out as a child, then He lets you reach maturity, then you become old while some of you die earlier. You attain an age, determined in accordance with Our ordinance. Now you should reflect.
[40:68] He is the only One who controls life and death. To have anything done, He simply says to it, "Be," and it is.
[40:69] Have you noted those who argue against God's signs and how they have deviated?
[40:70] They are the ones who have rejected the message sent to them and in the guidance We have sent with Our messengers. They will surely find out the consequences.
[40:71] The shackles will be around their necks and the chains will be used to drag them
[40:72] through the inferno, then in the Fire they will burn.[809]
[40:73] They will be asked, "Where are the authorities you used to serve
[40:74] beside God?" They will say, "They have abandoned us. In fact, when we served them, we were worshipping nothing." Thus do the disbelievers drift away.

Jewish belief that the 'holy soul' only enters the body during this ritual. It's does not appear that the Sunni tradition subscribes to this. None of these rites (on males or females) have been decreed by God, and unless for medical reasons or indeed personal preference, need not be carried out. Any ritual, no matter how wrong or detrimental, once established over time as 'decreed by God', becomes difficult, if not impossible, to eradicate. See verses and footnotes 68:37; 82:7; 95:4.

[808] **The messenger** undoubtedly followed tradition common in his society and was therefore stopped from worshipping idols when he received the revealed guidance from God. There were other occasions when the messenger erred and was corrected by God, and also other messengers had doubts, faltered or disobeyed God. Except in the case of receiving and conveying God's revelation and guidance protected by God, messengers in their daily human capacity were capable of making mistakes or being wrong. How then can other human beings such as imams, saints and others be seen as infallible? Messengers with human failings: see verses ***Muhammad*** 9:43; 17:73; 33:37; 48:2; 66:1-4; 69:44-52; 80:1; 93:1-11; 94:1-8. ***Abraham*** 2:260; 6:75-78; 60:4. ***Adam*** 20:115-121. ***Jonah*** 21:87; 37:139-148; 68:48. ***Moses*** 7:143. ***Solomon*** 38:32-36. ***Messengers*** 27:10-11.

[809] **These are** allegorical descriptions, but without doubt those who do not prepare themselves will suffer tremendously in the future environment. The word "inferno'' is used to describe this particular situation that will be unbearable due to lack of sufficient growth and development of their Self. Preparation and development of the Self is accomplished by virtuous deeds. See verse and footnote 40:47.

[40:75] This is because you used to endorse false doctrines on earth with nothing but disregard for the truth.
[40:76] Enter the gates of hell wherein you abide forever. What a miserable end for the arrogant ones.
[40:77] You shall be patient, for God's promise is truth. Whether We show you some of the punishment We have promised for them or terminate your life before that, they will be returned to Us.
[40:78] We have sent messengers before you: some of them We have mentioned to you and to some We did not mention. No messenger produces a manifest sign without God's leave. Once God's judgment is issued, the truth dominates and the falsifiers are exposed and humiliated.
[40:79] God is the One who created the livestock for you. Some you ride or use for carrying and some you eat.
[40:80] They also provide you with additional benefits that satisfy many of your needs. You also build ships on which you travel across the seas.
[40:81] He thus shows you His signs. Which of God's signs can you deny?

FOLLOWING PARENTS BLINDLY: A GREAT HUMAN TRAGEDY

[40:82] Have they not travelled the earth and noted the consequences for those who preceded you? They used to be greater in number, greater in power and possessed a greater legacy on earth than you. Yet, all their achievements did not help them in the least.
[40:83] When the messengers went to them with clear signs, they only rejoiced in the knowledge they had inherited and the very things they derided were the cause of their fall.[810]
[40:84] Subsequently, when they saw Our punishment they said, "Now we believe in God alone and we now reject the authorities we fabricated and followed to rank with God."[811]
[40:85] Their contrition then could not help them in the least, once they saw Our retribution. Such is God's way that has been established to deal with His creatures: the disbelievers are always doomed.[812]

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[810] **Following** your parents blindly is one of the greatest human tragedies. Not long after your birth, they decide your name, nationality, religion and sect. And you spend the rest of your life defending something you did not even choose. See verse 37:74; 43:22-25.
[811] **Serve God** *alone* and follow Quran *alone.* When punishment is looming only then the majority of people reject the false authorities and the contrived doctrines and laws that they follow. Those who set up authorities to rank with God are *mushrikeen*: those who commit high treason, a crime most heinous. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 7.70; 9:4; 39:3; 50:45; 68:36-38 & 10:31; 12:106.
[812] **God's way:** (Arabic: *sunnatullah*) God's system is constant and does not change. Unchanging principles in changing times: Permanent Values always remain the same, as does the retribution for dealing with those who set up authorities to rank with God by making laws in contradiction with the Quran. See verse 33:62.

Sura 41: The Elucidated (Fussilat)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[41:1] H. M.
[41:2] This is a revelation from the Most Merciful, Most Beneficent.
[41:3] A scripture with verses illuminated and explained, indeed an Arabic Quran for people who have knowledge.[813]
[41:4] A bearer of good news as well as a warning. However, most of them turn away so that they do not hear.
[41:5] They say, "Our minds are made up, our ears are deaf to your message and a barrier separates us from you. Do what you want and so will we."
[41:6] Say: "I am no more than a human being like you, who has been inspired that your God is the One God. You shall be devoted to Him and ask His protection. Misery indeed to those who set up authorities to rank with God.[814]
[41:7] "Who do not purify themselves with virtuous deeds and ardently reject the life yet to come with misplaced confidence."
[41:8] As for those who believe in this guidance and lead a life of good works, they receive a well-deserved recompense.
[41:9] Say: "You disbelieve in the One God who created the earth in two periods and you set up authorities to rank with Him, yet it is He who is the sustainer of the universe."
[41:10] He placed on it mountains as stabilisers, made it self-perpetuating and He measured and initiated its due provisions in four periods to satisfy the needs of all its inhabitants.
[41:11] Then He turned to the atmosphere when it was still gaseous and directed it, and then commanded the earth to come into existence. All matter conceded to God's ordinance, willingly.[815]
[41:12] Thus, He completed the seven universes in two periods and set up the ordinance for every universe. And We adorned the lowest universe with stars as lamps and placed barriers around it. Such is the design of the Almighty, the One aware of all things.

THE MESSENGER'S WARNING TO MANKIND

[41:13] If they turn away, then say, "I am warning you of a disaster like the disaster that annihilated Aad and Thamoud."
[41:14] A messenger went to them, as well as before them and after them, saying, "You shall not serve any authority to equal or rival with God." They

[813] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verse and footnote 2:185.
[814] **The messenger** is no more than a human like you. A clear statement to show the human nature of the messenger. See verses 7:188, 18:110; 28:56, 33;37, 40:66; 41:6, 46:9, 60:12, 80:1-12.
[815] **The earth** and the sky do not of course have 'free will'. They comply with God's law and this is just an metaphorical description of their absolute compliance with His ordinance.

said, "Had our Sustainer willed to reveal anything, He would have sent an angel. We reject what you say."[816]
[41:15] As for Aad, they turned arrogant on earth, opposed the truth and said, "Who is more powerful than we?" Did they not realise that God, who created them, is more powerful than they? They were unappreciative of Our revealed guidance.
[41:16] Consequently, We sent upon them violent winds for a few miserable days. We thus afflicted them with humiliating retribution in this life and the retribution in the life yet to come brings more disgrace. They can never win.
[41:17] As for Thamoud, We provided them with guidance but they preferred blindness over guidance. Consequently, a disastrous and shameful retribution annihilated them. They received only what they earned.

PROOF BECOMES SELF-EVIDENT

[41:18] We always save those who believe and lead a righteous life.
[41:19] The day will come when the enemies of God will be compelled in to a hellfire to face responsibility for what they did.
[41:20] Once they get there, their own hearing, eyes and skins will bear witness to everything they had done.
[41:21] They will wonder that their skins bear witness against them. God sees the evidence they do not. He is the One who causes everything to attest and show what has been witnessed. He is the One who created you the first time and now you have been returned to Him.
[41:22] You cannot hide anything from your own hearing, your own eyes or your own skins. In fact, you think that God is unaware of many things that you do.
[41:23] Erroneous thinking about your Sustainer will cause you to fall and then you really do become losers.
[41:24] If you continue this misguided way then hell will be your conclusion, and even if you make up excuses you will not be excused.
[41:25] According to Our ordinance, some attract companions who make everything they do seem good in their eyes. Thus they end up incurring the same fate as the previous communities from the non-prominent people and of the urbanites who were also losers.
[41:26] Those who disbelieved said, "Do not listen to this Quran and distort it so that you may succeed."[817]
[41:27] We will certainly afflict those who reject this guidance with a severe retribution. We will certainly punish them for their evil works.

[816] **Angel:** Those who have no proper knowledge believe the malaika to be female angels. See verses and footnotes 2:30; 6:8.
[817] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verse and footnote 2:185.

[41:28] Such is the penalty that awaits God's enemies. Hell will be their eternal abode, a just punishment for rejecting Our guidance,[818]
[41:29] and those who disbelieved will say, "Our Sustainer, show us those among the two kinds, apparent and unapparent creations who misled us, so we can trample them under our feet and render them the lowliest."

THE LAW: GOOD DEEDS ATTRACT GOOD THINGS

[41:30] Those who proclaim: "The One who Sustains us is our God," then lead a righteous life, they attract good energies and they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve. Rejoice in the good news that peace and security is reserved for you.
[41:31] These malaika are their allies in this life and in the Hereafter. They will have anything they wish for, they will have anything they want.
[41:32] Such is your ultimate abode from the Protector, Most Merciful.
[41:33] Who can convey better words than one who invites to God, works righteousness and says, "I am one of the submitters."?

VIRTUOUS ACTS CAN MAKE FRIENDS OF YOUR ENEMIES

[41:34] Not equal are the good response and the bad response. You shall resort with the best possible response. Thus, the one who used to be your enemy may become your close friend.[819]
[41:35] None can attain this except those who steadfastly persevere. None can attain this except those who are have the willpower and motivation to attract such goodness.

DO NOT BE SEDUCED TO DO WRONG

[41:36] When an egotistic Self lures you with an idea, you shall seek refuge in God. He is the Hearer and aware of all things.
[41:37] Among His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Do not worship the sun, nor the moon. You shall concede to the One God who created them, if you truly serve Him alone.
[41:38] Some may be too arrogant to do this but those who turn to your Sustainer glorify Him night and day without ever tiring.

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[818] **Medical advice** is not to smoke as it may cause cancer, sight loss and death. Passive smoke causes immediate harm to children and adults alike, affects the cardiovascular system and increases the risk of heart attacks. Despite graphic health warnings, people smoke, so is it any wonder smokers suffer? Similarly, those who reject the guidance in the Quran to stop harmful acts and regressive behaviour will suffer, and those around them will also experience the consequences. This is the punishment they have attracted for not implementing God's guidance. **What is evil?** Why do bad things happen to good people? See verses and footnotes 7:201; 8:25.

[819] **Tolerance and understanding** is advocated at all times by God. A good example is the best weapon against evil and corrupt people. By applying this guidance individuals can excel in being good examples. See verse 60:8; 16:125.

[41:39] Among His signs is that you see the land dry and barren, then, as soon as We shower it with water, it vibrates with life. Surely, the One who revives the lifeless land can revive the dead people. He is All-powerful.
[41:40] Surely, those who distort Our revelations are not hidden from Us. Is the one who is compelled into hell better or one who comes to Us secure on the Day of Resurrection? Do whatever you wish, He sees everything you do.[820]
[41:41] Those who reject this reminder when it comes to them, have rejected a guidance of infinite esteem.
[41:42] No falsehood could enter it in the past and no falsehood can enter it in the future; a revealed guidance from the One Most Wise, the One most worthy of all praise.[821]
[41:43] Nothing is conveyed to you what was not said to the previous messengers. Your Sustainer possesses protection and He possesses a retribution most grievous.[822]

GOD'S MESSAGE VALID IN ANY LANGUAGE

[41:44] Had We made it a non-Arabic Quran they would have said, "If only We could understand the language?" Whether it is Arabic or non-Arabic, say, "For those who believe, it is a guide that looks after their interests. As for those who reject it, they will be deaf and blind to it as if they are being called from afar."[823]
[41:45] We gave Moses the scripture and it was also disputed. If it were not for your Sustainer's predetermined decision, they would have been judged immediately. Indeed, they harboured too many doubts.
[41:46] Whoever works righteousness does so for his own good and whoever works evil does so to his own detriment. Your Sustainer is never unjust towards any people.

LEADERS DISOWN THEIR FOLLOWERS

[41:47] With Him is the knowledge about the ultimate conclusions. No fruits emerge from their sheaths nor does any female conceive or give birth without His knowledge. The day will come when He asks them: "Where are

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[820] **People** are free to choose, but not free from the consequences of their choice. God's law of Requital ensures that just conclusion is given for your actions. Good works attract a good life and bad deeds inevitably result in punishment.
[821] **Since revealed,** the Quran has been preserved by memory, as the printed word and now in electronic format. Nothing in the Quran has changed and its enduring values remain today as the day it was first revealed - an unerring guidance. See verses 4:82; 68:37.
[822] **The Quran** is a reminder and the values given here are not any different to those given to previous messengers and communities. See verse and footnote 46:9.
[823] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R).If the Quran was revealed in another language then the Arabs would have questioned how can they understand it? In fact, whatever the original language, for those who seek guidance, the message will be clear. See verse and footnote 2:185.

those authorities that you set up to rank with Me?" They will say, "We proclaim to You that none of us bears witness to that."
[41:48] The authorities they idolise will disown them and they will realise that there will be no escape.
[41:49] The human being never tires of imploring for good things. And when adversity befalls him he turns despondent and desperate.
[41:50] And when We bless him after suffering some adversity, he says, "This belongs to me. I do not believe that the end will ever come to pass. Even if I am returned to my Sustainer, I will find from Him better things." Most certainly, We will inform the disbelievers of all their works and will commit them to severe retribution.
[41:51] When We bless the human being, he turns away and drifts farther and farther away and when he suffers any affliction, he implores loudly.
[41:52] Proclaim: "What if this guidance is truly from God, then you decide to reject it? Who is farther astray than the one who decides to oppose this?"

A PROMISE OF GREAT DISCOVERIES

[41:53] We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves, until they realise that this is the truth. Is your Sustainer not sufficient as a witness of all things?[824]
[41:54] Indeed, they are doubtful about meeting their Sustainer. He is fully aware of all things.

[824] **Modern science:** medicine, astronomy, natural history, archaeology and many other fields in science continue to discover new things in the human mind, body, in the world around us and in outer space. In the complexity of these marvels there is so much order, design and balance, the perceptive individual can see intelligence implicit in them. **Intelligent design:** Where there is a purposeful arrangement we can call it design. Intelligent design goes a step further with the design of the end product not only flowing from the data itself but also verifying the information within itself. We know that this 'Self Reference' is in the Quran, and when we understand this we can conclude that the Quran was authored by someone beyond human intelligence - even if we don't know much about the author. If, for example, we can identify separate parts of a human cell that operate in an ordered way, it infers that an intelligent mind has been at work. Reflecting on this together with all other biological, chemical and physical systems that operate in a highly ordered and organised way infers nothing but an intelligent designer. We may, if we will, call Him God. See verses: 7:201; 68:52. **Evolution:** the process by which different kinds of living organism have developed from earlier forms during the history of the earth. While application of natural selection tell us many aspects of how life evolved, it is quite limited in explaining many things that biochemical discoveries can now explain, and indeed there are many things that still have to be understood. In the last hundred years the progress in science has been unprecedented, verse 41:53 states all discoveries are 'signs' of God *in the horizon and within ourselves.* For us, God's existence is inferential - all signs point to God, whether we fully understand them or not is a different matter. See verses 10:5-6; 36:82; 54:49; 65:12. See also 16:69; 20:53.

Sura 42: Consultation (Al-Shoora)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[42:1] H. M.
[42:2] A. S. Q.
[42:3] God, the Almighty, inspires you and those before you and He is the Almighty and the Most Wise.
[42:4] To Him belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth and He is the Most High, the Exalted.

[42:5] The heavens above function in an awesome gathering, consonant with His ordinance and the malaika honour and exalt their Sustainer and they protect those on earth, consistent with His ordinance. Absolutely, God is the Protector and the Most Merciful.

[42:6] There are those who delude themselves as providers to rank with God and others give eminence to them, yet God is the one who sustains them all, God is the One in charge of them and you are not their advocate.
[42:7] We thus reveal to you an Arabic Quran to warn the prominent community and all those around them and to warn about the Day of Accountability that is inevitable. Some will end up in harmony and some in turmoil.[825]

[42:8] Had God willed, He could have made them one community. But He redeems into His mercy according to His ordinance. As for the transgressors, they have no protector or a helper.
[42:9] Can they find other providers beside Him? God is the only Sustainer and Protector. He is the One who resurrects the dead and He is the one who is All-powerful.
[42:10] If you dispute any part of this message, the ultimate decision rests with God. "Such is God, the One who sustains me. In Him I trust and to Him I turn."

NO AUTHORITY IS EQUAL TO GOD

[42:11] Initiator of the heavens and the earth. He created for you from among yourselves spouses and also paired the animals. He thus provides you with the means to multiply. There is nothing that is equal to Him. He is the Hearer and the Seer of all things.
[42:12] To Him belongs absolute control of the heavens and the earth. He is the One who, consistent with His ordinance, increases the provision for whomever He wills or reduces it. He is fully aware of all things.

[825] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verses and 2:185.

DEEN-ISLAM: BEFORE AND NOW

[42:13] He decreed for you the same Deen, the established Order, that He decreed for Noah and what We reveal here to you, and the same that We decreed for Abraham, Moses and Jesus. You shall uphold this one deen: Deen-Islam and do not become divided. Those who commit treachery and corruption will greatly resent what you invite them to do. God redeems to Himself those who do good, in accordance with His ordinance. He guides to Himself only those who seek a way to peace and security.[826]

[42:14] Ironically, they broke up into sects only after the knowledge had come to them, due to jealousy and resentment among themselves. If it were not for a decision from your Sustainer to respite them according to His ordinance, they would have been judged immediately. Indeed, the later generations who inherit this guidance are also full of doubts.

A CALL TO THE UNBELIEVERS

[42:15] This is what you shall teach and steadfastly maintain what you are commanded to do and do not follow their wishes. And proclaim: "I believe in all the revealed guidance sent down by God. I was commanded to judge among you equitably. God is our Sustainer and your Sustainer. We have our deeds and you have your deeds. There is no argument between us and you. God will gather us all together and to Him is the ultimate return."

[42:16] There are those who challenge you about God after receiving His message of guidance, but their opposition is nullified at their Sustainer. They have incurred condemnation and have deserved a severe retribution.[827]

[42:17] God is the One who sent down this book to deliver the balanced truth. For all that you know, the End and Day of Reckoning may be very close.

[42:18] Challenging it are those who do not believe in it. As for those who believe, they are concerned about it and they know that it is the truth. Absolutely, those who deny the End have drifted far away

[42:19] God is fully aware of all His creatures; He provides according to His ordinance. He is the Powerful and the Almighty.

[42:20] Whoever seeks the rewards of the Hereafter, We increase his reward. And whoever seeks only the materials of this world, We give him from it and then he receives no share in the Hereafter.

INNOVATION CHANGES DEEN INTO RELIGION

[42:21] They follow authorities who decree for them laws in their deen that were never authorised by God. If it were not for a decision consistent

[826] **The Deen-Islam** in the Quran is no different to that brought by previous messengers. The messenger followed what is revealed to him because he was a guiding example and led a life according to Quranic values: see verse 6:159; 41:42-43; 46:9.

[827] **Challenge,** confront, trial, test (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). See verse and footnote: 2:76.

with His ordinance, they would have been judged immediately. Indeed, the transgressors have incurred a painful retribution.[828]
[42:22] You will see the transgressors worried about everything they have committed, realising that they will now face the consequences. As for those who believed and led a righteous life, they will be in peace and security. They will receive whatever they wish from their Sustainer. This is the great blessing.
[42:23] This is the good news from God to His servants who believe and lead a righteous life. Say: "I do not ask you for any payment. I ask each of you to take care of your own family and relatives." Anyone who does a righteous work, We multiply his reward. God is Protector and responsive.

GOD ERASES FALSEHOOD AND AFFIRMS THE TRUTH

[42:24] Are they saying, "The messenger fabricated lies about God?" If God willed, He could have sealed your mind, but God erases the falsehood and affirms the truth with His words. He is fully aware of your innermost thoughts.
[42:25] He is the One who accepts repentance from His servants and overlooks many of their lapses. He is fully aware of everything you do.[829]
[42:26] Responding to Him are those who believe and lead a righteous life. He will shower them with good things. As for those who reject this guidance, they have incurred a severe retribution.
[42:27] If God increased the provision for His servants, they would transgress on earth. This is why He sends it measured and consistent with His ordinance. He is fully aware and sees all things of His servants.
[42:28] He is the One who sends down the rain after they had despaired and spreads His mercy. He is the only Protector and Most Praiseworthy.
[42:29] Among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the creatures He spreads in them. He holds them responsible according to His ordinance.
[42:30] Anything bad that happens to you is a consequence of your own deeds and He overlooks many of your offences.
[42:31] You can never escape and you have none beside God as a Sustainer and Protector.

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[828] **Over time** a metamorphosis has taken place. A unique and dynamic Social System, the Deen of Islam, has been changed into a perverse *religion* masquerading as Deen-Islam. The very fact that there are so many versions practised by diverse sects is evidence enough that there is something seriously wrong. The Islam of today's Muslim world has been so distorted. The Ulama or religious scholars, have added many extraneous laws, prohibitions, dress codes, dietary regulations, religious practices and rituals never authorised by God. See verses and footnotes 4:60; 6:114; 6:159; 42:21; 49:16.; 5:50; 16:105; 16:116.

[829] **Repentance** is only accepted when regressive actions are replaced by virtuous deeds. Only good works nullify the bad works. See verse 11:114. **Repentance:** See verses 9:112; 68:32.

[42:32] Among His signs are the ships that sail the sea with sails like flags.
[42:33] If He willed, He could have stilled the winds, leaving them motionless on top of the water. These are signs for those who are steadfast and appreciative.
[42:34] He can annihilate the guilty as a consequence of their own works. Instead, He overlooks many of their faults.
[42:35] Those who argue against Our guidance will find out that they have no basis.
[42:36] Whatever you are given is no more than temporary materials of this life. What God possesses is far better and everlasting for those who believe and trust in their Sustainer.

VIRTUES DISTINGUISH THE RIGHTEOUS

[42:37] The righteous avoid gross offences and depravity, and even when angered they seek protection to curtail the situation.
[42:38] They respond to their Sustainer by observing their commitments. Their affairs are decided by consensus and after due consultation among themselves and from Our provisions to them they spend for the good of social welfare.[830]
[42:39] When gross injustice befalls them they stand up for their rights and defend themselves until victorious.[831]
[42:40] Although the just requital and a right for an injustice is an equivalent retribution, those who pardon and maintain righteousness are rewarded by God. He does not support the unjust.
[42:41] Certainly, those who seek justice and reparation when a grievance befalls them are not to be blamed.
[42:42] The corrupt are those who treat people unjustly and resort to aggression without provocation. These have incurred a painful retribution.
[42:43] Persevering patience provides protection and reflects true strength of character.[832]

[830] **Social Welfare** and helping those in need is a duty for every individual. This spending on social welfare is not an act of charity but a right to be given to all those entitled to it. See verse 2:215 and footnote. See verse and footnote 21:112 & 58:11; 62:9-11 & 49:2. **Consensus:** while Absolute Laws and Permanent Values are fixed, deciding matters by consensus, such as making by-laws, choosing a leader to govern, within the parameters of the Quranic guidance is not only permissible but necessary. See also verses and footnotes 24:62; 3:159; 49:2; 58:11; 62:9-11.
[831] **Martyrdom:** Mu'mins, those convinced by this guidance, are prepared to fight for a just cause and to kill or get killed, and they receive their well deserved reward from God. See verses and footnotes 3:158, 4:75-76; 8:58. **Aggression** is forbidden. See verse and footnote 4:78.
[832] **Persevering** patience is not a passive act, but a strength building process of moving forward and onward motivated by a will to progress. This also provides protection against depressive feelings and negative thoughts. See verse and footnote 2:153.

[42:44] Whomever God allows astray will never find any other provider and you will witness such transgressors when they see the retribution, saying, "Can we get another chance?"
[42:45] You will see them facing it, humiliated and debased and looking yet trying to avoid looking. Those who believed will proclaim: "The real losers are those who lost their Self and their families on the Day of Resurrection. The transgressors have deserved an everlasting retribution."
[42:46] There will be no allies to help them against God. Whomever God allows astray can never be guided.
[42:47] You shall respond to your Sustainer before a day comes which is decreed inevitable by God. There will be no refuge for you on that day, nor an advocate.

MESSENGER'S SOLE MISSION: DELIVERY OF THE MESSAGE

[42:48] If they turn away, We did not send you as their guardian. Your sole mission is the complete conveyance of this guidance. When We shower the human beings with mercy they become proud and when adversity afflicts them, as a consequence of their own deeds, the human being turns into one who rejects this guidance.
[42:49] To God belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He creates according to His ordinance; grants daughters consistent with His ordinance, and grants sons consistent with His ordinance,
[42:50] or He may have the males and the females marry each other in order to reproduce and then renders some sterile, in accordance with His ordinance. He is aware of all things and is All-powerful.

GOD SENDS HIS GUIDANCE

[42:51] No human being can communicate with God except through inspiration or separated by an invisible barrier or by Him sending a malaika through whom He reveals His guidance, according to His ordinance. He is the Most High, Most Wise.
[42:52] Thus, We inspired to you a revelation proclaiming Our guidance. You had no idea about this guidance or about belief with sincerity and conviction. Yet, We made this a beacon to guide those from among Our servants, according to God's ordinance. Surely, God guides in a straight and balanced path,
[42:53] the path of God, to whom belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth. Absolutely, all matters are controlled by God.

Sura 43: The Ornaments (Al-Zukhruf)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[43:1] H. M.
[43:2] This is a book with a clear enlightening message and guidance.
[43:3] We have rendered it an Arabic Quran, that you may understand.[833]
[43:4] An enduring ordinance from a source most honourable and wise.
[43:5] Should We just ignore the fact that you have transgressed beyond the limits?
[43:6] We have sent many a messenger to previous generations.
[43:7] When each time a messenger went to them, they ridiculed him.
[43:8] Consequently, We annihilated people who were even more powerful than you. We thus set some examples from previous communities.
[43:9] If you ask them, "Who created the heavens and the earth," they say, "The Almighty, the One who is aware of all things has created them."[834]
[43:10] He is the One who made the earth habitable for you and created for you roads therein, that you may travel the right way in comfort and safety.[835]
[43:11] He is the One who sends down from the sky water in exact measure to revive dead lands therewith. Similarly, you will be resurrected.
[43:12] He is the One who created all kinds, in pairs of male and female and He created for you ships to sail and livestock to travel on.
[43:13] As you rest on them, you shall appreciate such a blessing from your Sustainer and say, "Glory be to the One who subdued this for us. We could not have controlled them by ourselves.[836]
[43:14] "We ultimately return to our Sustainer."

DAUGHTERS OF GOD: A BLASPHEMY

[43:15] They even assigned for Him a share from His own creation. Surely, the human being is profoundly unappreciative.
[43:16] Has He chosen from among His creations daughters for Himself, while blessing you with sons?

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[833] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). Arabic is an efficient language, especially in expressing commandments, statutes, and exacting laws. Hence the revelation of the Quran in Arabic for clear understanding. Many Arabic words (sugar, alcohol etc.) are already common in everyday English and to introduce new words only enhances the language, especially where precise terms such deen, muslim or zulm require to be conveyed and no appropriate equivalent exists. See verses and footnote 2:185; 27:11.
[834] **The majority** who profess belief in the One God also commit *shirk*, high treason. **Disbelievers** think they are believers. See verse 12:106.
[835] **People prefer** the safety and ease of travelling on a well constructed road or path that takes them straight to their destination. Likewise they should take this guidance to avoid the trials and errors as they go along the journey of life.
[836] **Mankind** dominates in this world, all according to the ordinance of God. See verse 2:34.

[43:17] When one of them is given news of a daughter, similar to the claim they set forth for the Most Gracious, his face is darkened with misery and furious with anger.
[43:18] They say, "What is good about a daughter that is brought up to be weak and gentle and cannot help in war?"
[43:19] They claimed that the malaika, who are servants of the Most Gracious, are females. Did they witness their creation? Their claims are recorded and they will be questioned.[837]
[43:20] They even said, "If the Most Gracious willed, we would not have worshipped the angels." They have no basis for such a claim. They only conjecture.
[43:21] Have We given them a book other than this guidance that they have a mandate to uphold?

INHERITED RELIGIONS CONDEMNED

[43:22] The fact is that they said, "We found our parents following a religion and we are following in their tradition."[838]
[43:23] Invariably, when We sent a warner to any community, the leaders of that people said, "We found our parents following old customs and We will continue in their footsteps."
[43:24] If messengers asked, "What if I brought to you better guidance than what you inherited from your parents?" They said, "We reject anything you bring."
[43:25] Consequently, We punished them. Note the consequences for those who reject this message.

ABRAHAM'S EXAMPLE TO ALL MANKIND

[43:26] Abraham said to his father and his people, "I disown what you worship.
[43:27] "Only the One who initiated me can guide me."
[43:28] This example of Abraham is given as an everlasting lesson for all generations; perhaps they reflect and redeem their Self.
[43:29] Indeed, God has given these people and their ancestors sufficient chances, then the truth came to them and a clarifying messenger.
[43:30] When the truth came to them, they said, "This will take us away from our faith[839] and we reject all of this."

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[837] **Angel:** Those who have no proper knowledge believe the malaika to be female angels. See verses and footnotes 2:30; 6:8; 43:20.
[838] **Following** your parents blindly is one of the greatest human tragedies. Not long after your birth, they decide your name, nationality, religion and sect. And you spend the rest of your life defending something you did not even choose. See verse 37:74; 40:83.
[839] **Faith** is belief without any proof, substance or foundation and this is what religious people have: an illusion that satisfies them but is of no practical lasting good.

[43:31] They said, "If only this Quran was sent down through a prominent man from any of our two communities"[840]
[43:32] Are they the ones who assign your Sustainer's mercy? We have assigned their shares in this life, raising some of them above others in ranks in order to let them serve one another. The mercy from your Sustainer is far better than any material they may hoard.
[43:33] If it were not that all people might become one disbelieving congregation, We would have granted everyone who disbelieves in the Most Gracious mansions with silver roofs and magnificent stairs upon which they could ascend.
[43:34] Their mansions would have impressive gates and luxurious furnishings.
[43:35] Also many ornaments. All these are the temporary materials of this lowly life. The life yet to come, at your Sustainer, is far better for the righteous.
[43:36] Anyone who disregards the message of the Most Gracious, We make him receptive, in accordance with Our ordinance, to his egotistic Self.
[43:37] Such influence will divert them from the straight and balanced path, yet make them believe that they are guided.
[43:38] When he comes before Us he will say, "I wish I did not give in to my Ego and I was poles apart from it. How miserably weak I made my Self."
[43:39] It will not console you on that day, as a transgressor, that it is you who will bear the punishment, caused by your own lapse of Self-character.
[43:40] Can you make the deaf hear, can you make the blind see or call back those who have strayed and are in manifest error?
[43:41] Whether We let them die before they see their error or not, We will surely punish them.
[43:42] Or We may show you the retribution We promised for them. We are in full control over them.
[43:43] You shall steadfastly teach what is revealed to you; you are in the right path.[841]
[43:44] This is a message for you and your people. All of you will be held responsible and accountable.
[43:45] Confirm with the messengers We sent before you: "Have We ever appointed any other authorities to be served as equals with the Most Gracious?"
[43:46] For example, We sent Moses with Our signs to Firawn and his elders, proclaiming: "I am a messenger from the Sustainer of the universe."
[43:47] When he showed them Our signs, they ridiculed them.

[840] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verses and footnotes 2:185.
[841] **The Quran** is God's revealed guidance and the messenger followed it, and so should those who believe in it, and not books that contradict it and even contradict each other. See verses and footnotes 6:50; 4:42; 68:37.

FIRAWN MISR WITH FLOWING RIVERS

[43:48] Every sign We showed them was greater than the one before it. We then afflicted them with the plagues, perhaps they may repent.[842]
[43:49] They said, "O you magician, implore your Sustainer on our behalf, since you have an agreement with Him to relieve this plague; we will then be guided."
[43:50] But as soon as We relieved their affliction, they reverted.
[43:51] Firawn announced to his people, "O my people, do I not possess the eminence and authority over Misr and these flowing rivers belong to me? Do you not see?[843]
[43:52] "Which one is better: me or that one who is lowly and can hardly speak?[844]
[43:53] "How come he does not possess a treasure of gold; how come the angels do not accompany him?"
[43:54] Firawn thus fooled his people and they obeyed him because they were corrupt people.
[43:55] When they persisted in opposing Us, We punished them and drowned them all.
[43:56] We rendered them as a precedent and an example for others.

JESUS: A SERVANT OF GOD

[43:57] When Jesus, the son of Mary was cited as an example, your people disregarded it.
[43:58] They said, "Is it better to worship our gods or to worship him?" They said this only to argue with you. Indeed, they were people who joined the opposition.
[43:59] He was no more than a servant whom We blessed and We sent him as an example for the Children of Israel.
[43:60] If We willed, We could have made the malaika to succeed you on earth.
[43:61] You should be aware that there is a set time for the End, so you should no longer harbour any doubt about it. You shall follow Me, this is the right path.
[43:62] Let not your evil Self repel you, it is your most ardent enemy.
[43:63] When Jesus went with the proofs, he said, "I bring to you the law to clarify some of the matters in which you dispute. You shall fulfil your duty to God and obey me.

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[842] **Repentance:** what is it? See verse 9:112.
[843] **This misr** had more than one river and therefore could not be Qubt or modern Egypt. Firawn's domain was not Egypt, and Moses and the Children of Israel were never in Egypt. There has never been any archaeological finds of Jewish artefacts or evidence of Jewish culture in the area. Firawn is a proper noun, the name of a specific person and not a common noun - general group description of people, e.g. monarch or king. See verses and footnotes 2:61; 12:111.
[844] **Moses** had a speech impediment and Firawn was referring to this. See verse 23:13.

[43:64] "God is my Sustainer and your Sustainer, you shall serve Him alone. This is the right path."
[43:65] The opponents dispute among themselves. Misery to those who transgress, the retribution of a painful day awaits them.
[43:66] Are they waiting for the End to come to them suddenly when they least expect it?
[43:67] Even close friends on that day will become enemies of one another, except for the righteous.

THE RIGHTEOUS ACHIEVE EMINENCE

[43:68] O My servants, you will have no fear on that day, nor will you grieve.
[43:69] They are the ones who believed in Our revelations and accepted this guidance.
[43:70] Enter a place of peace and security, together with your spouses, and rejoice.
[43:71] Offered to them will be golden trays and cups and they will find everything the heart's desire and the eyes wish for. You live therein forever.[845]
[43:72] Such is the Paradise that you inherit in return for your works.
[43:73] You will have in it all kinds of fruits from which you eat.
[43:74] Surely, the guilty will abide forever in the retribution of hell.
[43:75] Never will the retribution be commuted for them; they will be confined therein.
[43:76] It is not We who wronged them, it is they who wronged their own Self.
[43:77] They will implore their keeper: "Please let your Sustainer finish us off." He will say, "You are here forever."

MOST PEOPLE HATE THE TRUTH

[43:78] "We have given you the truth, but most of you hate the truth."
[43:79] Have you schemed some plot? We too are planning.
[43:80] Do they think that We do not hear their secrets and conspiracies? Yes indeed, Our malaika are with them, recording.
[43:81] Proclaim: "If the Most Gracious did indeed have a son, I would be the foremost of his worshippers."
[43:82] Be He glorified. He is the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth, the Sustainer with the great dominion, far above their claims.
[43:83] Let them blunder and play until they meet the day that is awaiting them.

[845] **These are** allegorical terms and the reality will no doubt be much different and far better. See verse and footnote 44:59.

[43:84] He is the only One who is God, the sovereign in the heavens and the only One who is God, sovereign on earth. He is the Most Wise and aware of all things.
[43:85] Most Exalted is the One who possesses all sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and everything between them. With Him is the knowledge about the End and to Him you will be returned.
[43:86] None of those whom they accept as authorities to equal or rival Him possess any power to intercede, unless their intercession coincides with the truth and they fully know that.[846]
[43:87] If you ask them who created them, they say, "God." Why then do they deviate?[847]
[43:88] When you proclaim in despair: "O my Sustainer, these people do not believe."
[43:89] You shall disregard them and say, "Salamun Alaikum: Peace be upon you;" they will surely find out.[848]

[846] **Intercession** is undeserved favouritism. See corresponding footnote to verse 2:254. **Those who** profess to believe in the One God can actually be *mushrik*. See verse: 12:106.
[847] **Tolerance** and understanding is advocated at all times by God. A good example is the best weapon against evil and corrupt people. By applying this guidance individuals can excel in being good examples. See verse 16:125.
[848] **Peace be upon you:** (Arabic: *salamun alaikum*). Greeting approved by God. See verse and footnote 6:54. **Sovereignty of God.** The Quran decrees that it is an unforgivable crime to rank anyone as an equal or rival with God. In no religion does this happen. For example in Christianity there is God, and Jesus is considered as his son. In Hinduism there are many Gods and none are jealous of the others. To assert that the 'muslim God' does not allow any other God, some think is strange. Is this not, they ask, egocentric of God? Does this not show human emotions in God? First of all it is only unforgivable if a person dies *before* accepting God and His guidance. This in fact is death before an individual can allow his Self to develop or the time to repair the damage to his Self. Secondly, this is not about jealousy or any other human emotion; it's about sovereignty. God is the One God, and there is no authority to rank with or rival Him. A person who holds anyone as an equal with God is challenging the sovereignty of God and is a traitor, or a *mushik*, to use the Quranic term. In this world, even a threat to the monarch's position is considered treachery, and opponents face harsh punishment and even death. The word in the Quran for treachery is *'shirk'* and the one who commits such an act is called a mushrik. What exactly is this treachery? Most people, even among the traditional Muslims, believe that to worship or hold in reverence a statue or an idol of some description is shirk. This is partially true but the Quran goes much further than that: to follow any laws or values that conflict with the Quran is also shirk. This means that those people who follow leaders, such as politicians and priests, who contradict the Quran are ardent enemies of God, and unless they change, God will punish them most severely. See *Shirk and Mushrikeen* in the Quranic Concepts sections. See verse and footnote 12:106 and 10:31; 13:6; 23:86; 29:61-63; 31:25; 49:3.

Sura 44: The Smoke (Al-Dukhan)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[44:1] H. M.
[44:2] This is the enlightening guidance in a book that makes it clear.
[44:3] We have sent it down in a blessed night and it comes as a warning.
[44:4] In this scripture every matter of law is made clear.
[44:5] It is a determined decree from Us that We send messengers.
[44:6] This is a mercy from your Sustainer. He is the Hearer, the One aware of all things,
[44:7] Sustainer of the heavens and the earth and everything between them. If only you could attain certainty.
[44:8] There is no other authority to rank with Him. He controls life and death; your Sustainer and the Sustainer of your ancestors.
[44:9] Indeed, they are doubtful and heedless.
[44:10] Therefore, watch for the day when the sky brings a concentrated smoke.
[44:11] It will envelope all the people. This is a painful retribution.
[44:12] "Our Sustainer, relieve this retribution for us; we are believers in your guidance."
[44:13] Now that it is too late, they remember. An enlightening messenger came to them.
[44:14] But they turned away from him, saying, "He is a well learned man, but a little mad."[849]
[44:15] We will relieve the retribution for a while; you will soon revert.
[44:16] The day We strike the final signal, We will even the field.

MOSES LEADS HIS PEOPLE

[44:17] We tested before them the people of Firawn. An honourable messenger went to them.
[44:18] Proclaiming: "Listen to me, servants of God. I am an honest messenger to you."
[44:19] And, "Do not be too arrogant to serve God. I bring to you powerful guidance.
[44:20] "I seek refuge in my Sustainer and your Sustainer, if you oppose me.
[44:21] "If you do not wish to believe, then simply leave me alone."
[44:22] Subsequently, he implored his Sustainer: "These are wicked people."
[44:23] God said, "Escape with My servants during the night when you will be pursued.

[849] **This verse** is as applicable today as it was at the time of the messenger. This enlightened message has come and yet even today many turn away saying: "God spoke to some Arab and he was able to write this down and it contains the answers to all things? A foolish belief." They say this without ever having reflected on the Quran. Who indeed is foolish? See verse 10:39.

[44:24] "Cross the water quickly; their troops will be drowned."
[44:25] Thus, they left behind many gardens and springs.
[44:26] Crops and a luxurious life.
[44:27] Blessings that they enjoyed.
[44:28] All these We caused to be inherited by other people.
[44:29] Neither the heavens, nor the earth wept over them and there was no respite for them.
[44:30] Meanwhile, We saved the Children of Israel from a humiliating persecution,
[44:31] from Firawn, who was a tyrant.
[44:32] We have chosen them from among all the people, knowingly.
[44:33] We showed them so many signs, which were indeed a great trial.

OPPOSITION NEVER CHANGES

[44:34] The present generations say,
[44:35] "We only die the first death and we will never be resurrected.
[44:36] "Bring back our forefathers, if you are truthful."
[44:37] Are they better than the people of Tubba and others before them? We annihilated them for their crimes.
[44:38] We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them as an amusement.
[44:39] We created them for a specific purpose, but most of them do not know.
[44:40] The Day of Accountability awaits them all.
[44:41] That is the day when no friend can help another friend in any way. No one can be helped.
[44:42] Only those who attain mercy from God. He is the Almighty, Most Merciful.

THE WRONGDOERS

[44:43] Surely, the tree of bitterness.
[44:44] Will provide the food for the wrongdoers.
[44:45] Like molten metal, it will boil in their stomachs.
[44:46] Like the boiling of hellish drinks.
[44:47] Take him and throw him into the centre of hell.
[44:48] Then pour upon his head the retribution of the inferno.
[44:49] Taste this: you thought you were so powerful, so honourable.
[44:50] This is what you used to doubt.

THE RIGHTEOUS

[44:51] The righteous will be in a secure position.
[44:52] Enjoying gardens and springs.
[44:53] Wearing velvet and satin, and close to each other.

[44:54] We grant them wonderful companions.
[44:55] They enjoy in it all kinds of fruits, in perfect peace.
[44:56] They do not taste death therein, beyond the first death and He has spared them the retribution of hell.
[44:57] Such is the blessing from your Sustainer. Such is the great triumph.
[44:58] We have thus clarified it in your language that they may take heed.
[44:59] Therefore wait. They too will have to wait.[850]

[850] **Heaven and hell:** These are allegorical descriptions. The horrors cannot be imagined or understood, just as the pleasure of heaven cannot be perceived. As these are allegorical terms, they should not be taken literally. These descriptions are simplified for our understanding, those in a state of peace and tranquillity are also described in metaphorical terms, as we would not be able to grasp the true nature of anything of a life yet to come, the same as no-one a thousand years ago would have been able to understand the quality and lifestyle we have today. However, paradise begins here in what we create for ourselves, so these descriptions may be true for those who are experiencing them in this life. All allegorical terms appealed to the Arabs, who were the first recipients of this message and could relate to them, given the harsh conditions they lived in.

Sura 45: The Humbled (Al-Jathiyah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[45:1] H. M.
[45:2] This is a revealed guidance from God, the Almighty, Most Wise.
[45:3] The heavens and the earth are full of signs for the believers.
[45:4] Also in your creation and the creation of all the animals, there are signs for people to attain certainty.[851]
[45:5] Also, the alternation of the night and the day and the provisions that God sends down from the sky to revive dead lands and the manipulation of the winds; all these are signs for people who understand.

WHICH HADITH OTHER THAN THE QURAN?

[45:6] These are God's revelations that We recite to you truthfully. In which hadith, other than God's revealed guidance, do they believe?[852]
[45:7] Misery to every fabricator who will be proved guilty.
[45:8] The one who hears God's revelations recited to him, then insists arrogantly on his way, as if he never heard them. Promise him a painful retribution.[853]
[45:9] When he learns anything about Our revelations, he mocks them. These have incurred a shameful retribution.
[45:10] Awaiting them is hell. Their money will not help them, nor the authorities they set up to rival or equal God. They have incurred a terrible retribution.
[45:11] This is a beacon and those who disbelieve in this guidance of their Sustainer have incurred condemnation and a painful retribution.
[45:12] God is the One who committed the sea to serve you, so that the ships can sail on it in accordance with His laws. You thus seek His provisions, that you may be appreciative.
[45:13] He committed in your service everything in the heavens and the earth, all are bounties from Him. These are signs for people who reflect. [854]

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[851] **All we need** to do is to look at the perfection of the universe, our world and ourselves. Those who possess intelligence will unfold, unravel and discover the wonders of this creation. Scientists are, of course, doing this now. See verse and footnote 3:190.
[852] **Hadith:** narration. Religious leaders have many fabricated hadith in their possession in order to influence and divert people. Here the question is which hadith other than the Quran will you believe? Those who follow guidance of a hadith, other than the Quran, are setting up the writers and propagators of these hadith as authorities to rival God, because they make laws that God alone has the authority to do. The fabricators, propagators and followers alike are condemned. See verses and footnotes 4:42. Laws other than God's: 42:21.
[853] **We all have opportunities** for Self development in preparation for the life yet to come. However, as the saying goes, once in a while everyone gets knocked down by the truth, but most people get up, dust themselves and walk on as if nothing had ever happened.
[854] **Everything in the universe** is at mankind's disposal. See verse 2:34.

[45:14] Tell those who believe to give lenient protection to those who do not expect accountability to God. He will fully pay everyone for whatever they have earned.
[45:15] Whoever works righteousness does so for his own good and whoever works evil does so to his own detriment. To your Sustainer you will be returned.
[45:16] We gave the Children of Israel the scripture and the law and made them Our messengers and provided them with good provisions. We bestowed upon them more blessings than any other people.
[45:17] We have given them in this guidance clear commandments. Ironically, they did not dispute this until the knowledge had come to them. This is due to jealousy on their part. Surely, your Sustainer will judge them on the Day of Resurrection regarding everything they dispute.
[45:18] We then appointed you to establish just laws; you shall follow this guidance and do not follow the wishes of those who do not know.
[45:19] They cannot help you at all against God. It is the transgressors who ally themselves with one another, while God is the Sustainer of the righteous.
[45:20] This provides enlightenment for mankind and guidance and mercy for those who seek certainty.
[45:21] Do those who work evil expect that We will treat them in the same manner as those who believe and lead a righteous life? Can their life and their death be the same? Indeed they are deluded in their judgment.
[45:22] God created the heavens and the earth for a specific purpose and will pay each Self for whatever it earned, without the least injustice.

THE EGO CHALLENGES GOD'S AUTHORITY

[45:23] Have you noted the one whose authority is his own Ego? Consequently, in accordance with God's ordinance, he moves astray, despite his knowledge. His perception and hearing are sealed and a veil shields his eyes. Who then can guide him, after such a resolution by God? Would you not take heed?[855]
[45:24] They said, "We only live this life. We live and die and only time causes our death" They have no sure knowledge about this, they only guess.
[45:25] When Our clear guidance is recited to them, their only challenge is to say, "Bring back our forefathers, if you are truthful."[856]

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[855] **There are people** who become subservient to their own desires and lose the capacity of using their faculties of seeing, hearing and thinking in the right direction. In spite of their being knowledgeable and astute they lead themselves in the path of destruction, from which they cannot escape without returning to God's laws and Permanent Values. To apply laws and values other than God's is shirk, treachery and an offence of great arrogance. See verses and footnotes 4:117; 18:32; 18:50; 20: 123; 25:43; 38:26; 45:23.
[856] **Challenge,** confront, trial, (Arabic: *hajj*. Root H'J'J). See verse and footnote: 2:76.

[45:26] Say: "God has granted you life, then He puts you to death, then He will summon you to the Day of Resurrection, which is inevitable. But most people do not know."
[45:27] To God belongs all sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. The day the End will come to pass, that is when the fabricators see defeat.

THE HUMBLING: WHEN EVERYTHING BECOMES EVIDENT

[45:28] You will see every community become humble. Every community will be called to view its own record. Today, you get paid for everything you did.
[45:29] This is Our record: it reveals the truth about you. We have been recording everything you did.
[45:30] As for those who believe and work righteousness, their Sustainer will admit them into His mercy. This is the great victory.
[45:31] As for those who reject this guidance: "Were not My revelations recited to you, but you turned arrogant and were wicked people?"

[45:32] When it is proclaimed that God's promise is the truth and that the End is inevitable, you said, "We do not know what the End is. It is nothing but speculation and we are not persuaded to believe in it."
[45:33] The evils of their works will become evident to them and the very things that they mocked will cause their doom.
[45:34] They will be enlightened thus: today We reject you for your disregard of this imminent accountability that you now face. Your life is now a hell and no one can help you.
[45:35] This is because you took God's revealed guidance in vain and were preoccupied with the first life. Consequently, they will never exit therefrom, nor will they be excused.
[45:36] To God belongs all praise: Sustainer of the heavens, Sustainer of the earth, Sustainer of the universe.
[45:37] To Him belongs all supremacy in the heavens and the earth. He is the Almighty, Most Wise.

Sura 46: The Dunes (Al-Ahqaf)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[46:1] H. M.
[46:2] The revelation of this guidance is from God, the Almighty, Most Wise.
[46:3] We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them except for a specific purpose and for a limited period. Those who reject this are totally oblivious to the warnings given to them.
[46:4] Say: "Consider the authorities you have set up to rank with God. Show me what on earth they created. Do they own part of the heavens? Show me any other scripture before this one or any piece of established knowledge that supports your fabricated authorities, if you are truthful."
[46:5] Who is more astray than those who obey besides God authorities that can never respond to them until the Day of Resurrection, and are totally unaware of their worship?[857]
[46:6] And when people are summoned on the Day of Accountability, their idols and authorities whom they serve to equal God will become their enemies and will denounce their idolatry.
[46:7] When Our guidance is given to them, perfectly clear, those who rejected said of the truth that came to them: "This is obviously a deception."
[46:8] When they say, "He fabricated this." Say: "If I fabricated this, then you cannot protect me from God. He is fully aware of everything you scheme. He suffices as a witness between me and you. He is the Protector and the Most Merciful."
[46:9] Say: "I have brought guidance that is no different from what other messengers brought. I have no idea what will happen to me or to you. I only follow what is revealed to me. I am no more than a profound warner."[858]
[46:10] Say: "What if it is from God and you disbelieved in it? A witness from the Children of Israel has testified to a similar phenomenon and he has believed, while you have turned arrogant. Surely, God does not guide the corrupt people."

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[857] **Those who worship** or follow dead saints and 'holy' people are in serious error. These idols and objects of worship in their state of death are not aware of being venerated and followed, and cannot answer any prayers. In any case, to serve anyone whose teaching contradicts the Quran is tantamount to 'shirk' the setting up an authority to rank with God. This is high treason and to be condemned. See verses and footnotes 9:1-10.

[858] **The Deen-Islam** in the Quran is no different to that brought by previous messengers. The messenger followed what is revealed to him because he was a guiding example and led a life according to Quranic values: See verses 2:97; 3:81; 28:41; 28:53; 33:21; 41:43; 42:13; 46:12; 46:30; 60:12; 33:21. See also verses 6:50; 6:159; 10:15; 30:32; 79:42-46.

[46:11] Those who rejected this guidance said about those who believed, "If it were anything good, they would not have accepted it before us." Because they were not guided to it, they said, "This is an old fabrication"
[46:12] Before this, the book of Moses provided guidance and mercy. This too is a scripture that confirms, in Arabic, to warn those who transgressed and to give good news to the righteous.
[46:13] Surely, those who say, "Our Sustainer is God," then lead a righteous life, will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.
[46:14] They have deserved peace and security, where they abide forever; a reward for their works.

HONOUR YOUR PARENTS

[46:15] We decreed the human being to honour his parents. His mother carried him arduously, gave birth to him painstakingly and took intimate care of him for thirty months. When he reaches maturity at the age of forty years, he should say, "My Sustainer, direct me to appreciate the blessings You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to do the righteous works that please You. Let my children be righteous as well. I have repented to You, and to You I submit."[859]
[46:16] It is from these that We accept the righteous works and disregard their wrongdoings. They have deserved peace and security. This is the truthful promise that is promised to them.
[46:17] Then there is the one who says to his parents, "Misery to you both. Are you telling me that after death I will come back to life? How come those who died before us never came back?" The parents plead for God's help and say, "We despair for you. Believe because God's promise is the truth." He replied, "These are nothing but tales from the past!"
[46:18] Such are the ones branded as those who have rejected God's guidance among every generation of undistinguished and prominent people; they are the losers.
[46:19] They all attain the ranks they have deserved in accordance with their works. He will pay them for their deeds without the least injustice.
[46:20] The day will come when those who disbelieved will be exposed to a torment of fire, a hell of their own making. You have wasted the opportunities given to you during your life in this world and you sought comfort in them. Consequently, today you incur a shameful retribution as a

[859] **Parents** deserve to be honoured by their children, so much so that even in disagreement children are not permitted to speak harshly to them or show signs of annoyance. In verse 17:23, the first decree is not to serve anyone as equal to God and the second is to honour your parents. This shows the significance of this command and examples are given both of John and Jesus who honoured their parents. Parents must be given eminence as demonstrated by Joseph when his parents arrived in Misr. See verses and footnote 2:61; 12:100; 12:111; 17:23; 19:14; 19:32; 43:51.

punishment for the arrogance you committed on earth without any basis and for your corrupt works.

THE COMMUNITY OF AAD

[46:21] Recall that the brother of Aad warned his people at the dunes. Numerous warnings were also delivered before him and after him: "You shall not serve any authority to rival or equal God. I fear for you the retribution of a great day."

[46:22] They said, "Did you come to divert us from our gods and the authorities whom we serve? We challenge you to bring the retribution you threaten, if you are truthful."

[46:23] He said, "The knowledge about this is with God. I convey to you only the complete message that I was sent to deliver. However, I see that you are an ignorant community."

[46:24] When they saw the storm heading their way, they said, "This storm will bring to us much-needed rain." Instead, this is what you challenged the previous messenger to bring, a violent storm wherein there is painful retribution.

[46:25] It destroyed everything as ordained by its Sustainer. By morning, nothing was standing except their homes. We thus punish the guilty people.

WARNING - THEN JUSTICE

[46:26] We established them in the same way as We established you and provided them with hearing, eyes and minds. But their hearing, eyes and minds did not help them at all. This is because they decided to disregard God's guidance. Thus, the promises and the warnings that they ridiculed caused their doom.[860]

[46:27] We have annihilated many communities around you, after We had shown them the signs, so that they might repent.

[46:28] Why then did the authorities they set up to bring them closer to God fail to help them? Instead, they abandoned them. Such were the false authorities that they obeyed. Such were the innovations that they fabricated.[861]

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[860] **Is it possible** that the God who endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect and then has intended us to forgo their use? It would be an insult to God's gift if we thought so. Many of the verses appeal to our intelligence, to seek knowledge, use our intellect to sift through it and arrive at a conclusion worthy of being a wise decision. We should believe because of the profound guidance the messengers brought. See verse 7:75.

[861] **People serve** authorities they set up because they say the bring them closer to God. See verse and footnote 39:3.

PEOPLE ON THE FRINGES OF SOCIETY TAKE HEED

[46:29] Recall that We directed a number of undistinguished people to you, in order to let them hear the Quran. When they got there, they said, "Listen with care." As soon as it was over they rushed to their people, warning them.
[46:30] They said, "O people, we have heard profound guidance that is revealed after Moses and it confirms the guidance of previous scriptures. It guides to the truth, to the right path.
[46:31] "O people, respond to the call of God and believe in His guidance. He will then protect you from your weaknesses and spare you a painful retribution."
[46:32] Those who fail to respond to God's call cannot escape and have no Sustainer other than Him. They have moved far astray.
[46:33] Do they not realise that God, who created the heavens and the earth without the least effort, is able to revive the dead? Indeed, He is All-powerful.
[46:34] The day the disbelievers are exposed to the fiery torment of a hell of their own making, they will be asked, "Is this not the truth?" They will answer, "Yes indeed, by our Sustainer." He will say, "Then suffer the retribution for your rejection of the truth."

ONLY THE WICKED AND CORRUPT FACE DESTRUCTION

[46:35] Therefore, be patient like the messengers before you who possessed strength and resorted to patience. Do not be in a hurry to see the retribution that will inevitably come to them. The day they see it, it will seem as if they lasted only an hour. When everything reaches its term, observe: is it not only the wicked and the corrupt who are totally ruined?[862]

[862] **Everything and everyone has a process** of development through which a level maturity is attained or achieved; for example when a person reaches puberty or old age. (Arabic: *baligh*. Root B'L'GH. Derivatives: *balagha, balagh, baligha, yablughu, ablagha*). This also means to develop or realise a latent potential, reach a term, absolute point or extent, completion, fulfilment, achievement, and redemption where through going through a period of development a potential is realised, e.g. after childhood and puberty, maturity is reached and an individual comes of age. Essentially anything or anyone that goes through a process to reach a point of completeness. Like many words in the Quran, the word 'baligh' is multi-faceted but crucially retains the root meaning. This is an important aspect of the Arabic structure in the Quran. A word can have many facets but can never have any meaning unconnected to its root. See verses: 2:231; 3:40; 4:6; 4:63; 5:92; 5:95; 5:99; 6:19; 6:128; 6.149; 14:52; 33:10; 33:45; 36:17. Also: 7:135; 13:14; 40:56; 54:5. **Messengers charged with delivering** the complete message/ sole duty to deliver the complete message: 3:20; 5:67; 5:92; 16:35; 24:54; 72:23.

Sura 47: The Praiseworthy (Muhammad)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[47:1] Those who disbelieve and repel others from the path of God, He nullifies their works.
[47:2] Those who believe and work righteousness and believe in what was sent down to *muhammad,* the praiseworthy, which is the truth from their Sustainer, He remits their wrongs and bestows upon them contentment.[863]
[47:3] This is because those who disbelieve are following falsehood, while those who believe are following the truth from their Sustainer. God diminishes their weaknesses and improves their circumstances.
[47:4] If you encounter in battle those who are active in their rejection of this guidance you may deal them fatal blows. If you take them as captives you may set them free or ransom them when the war ends. Had God willed He could have granted you victory without war. But He thus tests you by one another. As for those who get killed in the cause of God, He will never put their sacrifice to waste.
[47:5] He will guide them and bestow on them contentment.
[47:6] He will admit them into a place of peace and security that He allocates to them in the life yet to come.
[47:7] O you who believe, if you support God's cause, He will support you and strengthen your foothold.
[47:8] Those who reject this guidance incur misery and despair; He renders their works useless and utterly in vain.
[47:9] That is because they despised what God revealed, and consequently, He nullifies their works.
[47:10] Did they not travel the earth and see the consequences of those before them? God destroyed their works. All rejecters of this guidance will suffer the same end.
[47:11] This is because God is the Sustainer of those who believe while the disbelievers have no one to sustain them.
[47:12] God admits those who believe and lead a righteous life into gardens of peace and security. As for those who disbelieve, they live and eat like animals then end up in a fiery state, a hellfire of their own making.

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[863] **Muhammad:** Praiseworthy - because of his exemplary character. (Arabic: *muhammadin.* Root: H'M'D. Derivatives: *hamd, hamida, hamid, ahmad, muhammadun*). This verse reads: *"Those who believe and work righteousness and believe in what was sent down to the praiseworthy..."*. 'The word '*muhammad*' (with a small 'm') is not necessarily a proper name but like many words can be used as such, however, this is not the case in the Quran where it is always used as an adjective. It is clear that God did not use the messenger's name throughout the Quran despite him being the recipient of the revelation. The messenger's role, like messengers before him, was the perfect delivery of the complete and intact message and being an example to his people by following God's guidance. See verses 3:144; 33:40; 48:29; 61:6. See also 5:67; 43:43; 72:27-18 & 46:35.

[47:13] Many a community was much stronger than the community that evicted you from your town. When We annihilated them, no one could help them.
[47:14] Are those enlightened by their Sustainer the same as those who follow their own opinions and whose evil and corrupt works seem good to them in their own eyes?
[47:15] The allegory of the state of Paradise that is promised for those who keep their duty to God is this: it has rivers of pure water and flowing fresh intoxicating drinks that give exhilarating pleasure; delicious for the drinkers, and streams of strained honey. They have all kinds of fruits therein and protection by their Sustainer. Are they better than those who abide forever in the hellfire of their own making and drink hellish liquid that ravages their insides?[864]

GUIDANCE IS SIMPLE FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE

[47:16] Some of them listen to this guidance, then they ask those who are enlightened, "What is the meaning of all this?" Their hearts are thus sealed according to the ordinance of God and consequently, they only follow their own opinions.
[47:17] As for those who are guided, He augments their guidance and safeguards their righteousness.
[47:18] Are they waiting until the End comes to them suddenly? All the signs have already come. Once the End comes to them, how will they benefit from this reminder?[865]
[47:19] You shall know that: There is no other authority to rival or equal the One God, and ask protection for your faults and the faults of all believing men and women. God is fully aware of your decisions and your ultimate conclusion.
[47:20] Those who believed said: "When will some new guidance be revealed?" But when straightforward guidance was revealed, where fighting was advocated, you would see those who harboured doubts in their hearts, looking at you as if death had already come to them. They were thus exposed.

[864] **Exhilarating pleasure.** An allegory is only useful if it is within an individual's experience. For example even a desert nomad will know the pleasure of 'a garden with flowing streams' and imagery describing such a heavenly state will be attractive. But how does an intoxicating drink become alluring aspiration if it has never before been tasted? **Intoxicants:** (Arabic: *khamr*). See verses and footnotes 2:219; 4:43; 5:90; 12:36; 12:41; 12:49; 16:67. See also verses and footnotes 44:43-59. As verse 2:25 shows, everything in the life yet to come, including food and drink will be of an unequalled quality.
[865] **Contrition,** remorse or repentance at time of death is of no value. See verse 36:68-69.

[47:21] Obedience and righteous utterances are expected of them. If only they showed confidence in God when mobilisation was called for, it would have been far better for them.
[47:22] Is it the intention that once the believers have left for battle the remaining will commit evil and mistreat their relatives?
[47:23] It is these who incurred a curse from God and they are rendered deaf and blind, according to His ordinance.

THE EGOTISTIC SELF DIVERTS PEOPLE.

[47:24] Why do they not seek to sincerely understand the Quran? Do they have locks on their hearts and minds?[866]
[47:25] Surely, those who slide back into disbelief after this guidance has been manifested to them, their egotistic Self has thus enticed them and has diverted them.
[47:26] This is because they said to those who hated this guidance that God has revealed, "We will obey you in certain matters." God fully knows their secret conspiracies.[867]
[47:27] How will it be for them when the malaika put them to death? Their outcome will be determined and set forth from both ends without escape.
[47:28] This is because they followed what conflicted with God's guidance and hated the things that harmonised with it. Consequently, He has nullified their works.

EVIL AND CORRUPT PEOPLE RECOGNISED BY WHAT THEY SAY

[47:29] Did those who harbour doubts in their hearts think that God will not bring out their evil thoughts?
[47:30] If We will, We can expose them for you so that you can recognise them just by looking at them. However, you can recognise them by the way they talk. God is fully aware of all your works.[868]
[47:31] We will certainly put you to the test in order to distinguish those among you who strive and steadfastly persevere. We will expose your true values.
[47:32] Those who reject this guidance and repel others from the path of God and oppose the message after this guidance has been manifested for them, will never hurt God in the least. Instead, He nullifies their works.
[47:33] O you who believe, you shall obey God and follow this guidance or all your works will be in vain.

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[866] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). See verse and footnote 2:185.
[867] **Why would** people hate this guidance from God? Simply because it holds them accountable for their actions. Most people with weak and ever changing attitudes may not be able to handle the responsibility it puts on them**.** See verses 5:59; 23:70; 43:78; 47:30; 48:26. **Ego as authority** to rival God. See verse and footnote 45:23.
[868] **Hypocrites** exposed by what they say. See verses 2:8; 63:1. See also verses 47:26-28.

[47:34] Those who reject this guidance and repel others from the path of God, then die as disbelievers, God will never protect them.
[47:35] Therefore you shall not waver, be resolute and without surrender remain in pursuit of peace, for you are guaranteed victory and God is with you. He will never waste your efforts.[869]
[47:36] This worldly life is no more than play and vanity. But if you believe and do your duty to God, He will reward you without asking you for a share of any wealth you have.
[47:37] If He decrees for you to contribute to the extent of creating some hardship, you may become miserly and your hidden corruption might be exposed.[870]
[47:38] But you are invited to spend in the cause of God, yet some of you still turn miserly. The miserly are miserable only towards their own Self. God is the One who is enriched, while you are impoverished. If you turn away, He will substitute other people in your place, and they will not be like you.[871]

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[869] **Peace at any price** is no peace at all. To continually live in fear is more dreadful than war or death. This is why muslims are commanded not to fear conflict or death but to fight until victory is achieved against all that is corrupt and evil. See verses and footnotes 3:156-8; 42:39. Appropriate reprisal can and should be taken against individuals, communities and states, those whose intention is to harm you. See verses and footnotes 4:75-76; 8:55-61; 42:39. **Zero Tolerance:** The rejecters of this guidance should be dealt with strictly at all times. See verse and footnote 9.73.

[870] **Social Welfare:** it is a duty of every muslim to ensure that there is no undue suffering of people in their community. See verses and footnotes 2:219; 21:112.

[871] **Community**, in the Quranic context, is a group of people with the same values. When individuals associate and come together they become a community and a society. Such a collection of people are known as an Ummah. We see that when seed, soil and water are kept separate, they will not become a plant even if they are in close proximity. Before they can become a plant, certain conditions must be met and the primary condition is that they must be mixed so that they can work together. In the same way, if the individuals of a country remain separate, pursuing their own personal advantages, they can never be called a community. They only become a community when they make a connection, unite together and create a bond amongst themselves based on common values. From the Quran it is clear that individuals become a community only when they work in unison towards the same goal and the welfare of every person is central to achieving that aim. If this is not so then even if all the individuals are in the same vicinity or in the same place, they can never be a community. About these people the Quran, in verse 59:14, says that they may think that they are united when in fact their hearts are divided, simply because they are people who don't understand. An individual performs to his fullest potential only when he is part of a community based on the Islamic social order as set out in the Quran. See verses: 2:143; 3:103-5; 6:159; 15:88-96; 23:51-55; 30:32; 42:13-14; 94:5. The Self develops through social interaction as part of a community and this is why hermitism is forbidden. See verse and footnote 57:27.

Status of individuals within a community: For this analogy we can look at the way a timepiece such as a clock or a wristwatch that has many different components, each with a different function. Some parts may have diamond tips worth vastly more than a small metal screw. Separately, the screw and the diamond have no similarity in value but inside the watch the value of the screw is such that should it become loose and stop performing its job the whole watch can

Sura 48: The Victory (Al-Fatth)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[48:1] We bestowed upon the messenger an exceptional responsibility.
[48:2] Whereby God protected him from his past faults as well as those faults that may occur in the future, and perfects His blessings upon him and guided him in a straight and balanced path.[872]
[48:3] Additionally, God will maintain His resolute support for you.
[48:4] He is the One who places contentment into the hearts of believers to augment their conviction, in addition to their belief. To God belongs all forces of the heavens and the earth. God is the One aware of all things, the Most Wise.
[48:5] He will certainly admit the believing men and women into gardens watered with flowing streams, wherein they abide forever. He will remit their faults. This is in the sight of God a great triumph.
[48:6] And He will punish the hypocrite men and women and the men and women who follow authorities they rank with God, for they harbour treachery against God. Their evil works will backfire against them. For God opposes them, condemns them and has prepared for them a turmoil in a hell of their own making. What a miserable end.
[48:7] To God belongs all the forces in the heavens and the earth. God is Almighty and the Most Wise.

EACH PERSON CHARGED WITH UPHOLDING THIS GUIDANCE

[48:8] We have made you a witness, a bearer of good news and a warner,[873]
[48:9] that people will be held accountable for their belief in God and His message of guidance, and they should reverence Him and observe Him and glorify Him day and night.[874]
[48:10] Surely, those who pledge adherence to this guidance, are pledging allegiance to God. God approves their pledge; He places His hand above their hands. Those who violate such a pledge, commit a violation to their own detriment. As for those who fulfil their pledge with God, He will grant them a great recompense.[875]

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become useless and the highest valued part too becomes useless. When separate individuals become a united community, the individual who executes the most menial task does not lose his status and measure: his value as a human being is not diminished because of the work he does. **The measure** of each individual's endeavour: see verse and footnote 6:132.

[872] **The messenger** was a human being and had human failings. See verse and footnote 40:66.

[873] **Not only** the messenger but anyone who acquires the knowledge of this guidance is a witness to this revelation and, as such, has an incumbent duty to follow it and be an example for others. The whole world can be changed by one person. You. However, this job is not yours to finish - but neither are you free to take no part in it.

[874] **How do you glorify God?** God is glorified by the person who follows His guidance and becomes an example for others by doing his or her duty to God. See footnote to verse 57:1.

[875] **Pledging loyalty** to the messenger is now, as was during his leadership, the same as obedience to the message and guidance that he brought - ultimately fulfilling a duty to God. Placing hand

[48:11] The sedentary Arabs who stayed behind said, "We have been preoccupied with our money, property and our families, so ask protection for us." They uttered with their lips what was not in their hearts. Say: "Who can protect you from God, if He willed any adversity for you or if He willed any blessing for you?" God is fully aware of everything you do.[876]
[48:12] People secretly believed that the messenger and the believers will be defeated and never come back to their families and this was firmly established in their hearts. Many harboured evil thoughts and turned into wicked people.
[48:13] Anyone who refuses to believe in God and His messenger, We have prepared for the disbelievers a hellfire of their own making.[877]
[48:14] To God belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He protects according to His ordinance and punishes according to His ordinance. God is the Protector and the Most Merciful.

[48:15] The sedentary who stay behind will say, when you are expected to collect spoils of war, "Let us follow you to share in this." They thus wish to alter God's words. Say: "You will not join us. This is God's decision." They will then say, "You must be envious of us for staying behind." Indeed, they rarely understood anything.
[48:16] Say to the Arabs who stay behind, "You will be invited to face powerful people and to fight them, unless they succumb. If you obey, God will reward you with a generous recompense. But if you turn away again, as you did in the past, He will punish you with a painful retribution."
[48:17] The blind are not to be blamed, the disabled are not to be blamed and the sick are not to be blamed. Those who obey God and His messenger, He will admit them into gardens watered with flowing streams. As for those who turn away, He will punish them with a painful retribution.
[48:18] God approves of the believers who pledge allegiance to this guidance. He knows what is in their hearts, and consequently He bestows on them contentment and rewards them with an immediate victory.
[48:19] Additionally, they gain many rewards. God is Almighty, Most Wise.
[48:20] God has promised you many spoils that you will gain. He thus advanced some benefits for you in this life and He has withheld other people's hands of aggression against you and has rendered this a sign for the believers. He thus guides you in a straight and balanced path.
[48:21] As for the group that you could not possibly defeat, God took care of them. God is All-powerful.

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above hand, in this case with God, is obviously a metaphorical symbol of confirming a pledge. See verses and footnotes God. See verses and footnotes 5:1-7; 7:172; 57:8; 76:7.

[876] **Arabs** are mentioned specifically in this verse as they are in 48:16. See verse and footnote 9:90.

[877] **The messenger** is no longer here and to believe in the messenger is now to believe in the message that he brought. **To obey God** and the messenger is to obey this message and those who lead and administer according to the values and laws given in this Quran. See verses 48:17; 80:42.

[48:22] If the disbelievers ever fought you, they would turn around and flee. They have no one to sustain and protect them; they have no helper.
[48:23] Such is God's way throughout history and you will find that there is no change in God's way.[878]
[48:24] He is the One who withheld their hands of aggression against you and withheld your hands of aggression against them in Mecca, after He had granted you victory over them. God sees everything you do.
[48:25] It is they who disbelieved and averted you from the Sanctioned Submissions and even tried to prevent this message from reaching you. There were believing men and women within the enemy camp whom you did not know and you were about to hurt them, unknowingly. God thus admits into His mercy according to His ordinance. If they persist, He will punish those among them who reject this guidance with a painful retribution.[879]
[48:26] While those who rejected this guidance were enraged and their hearts were filled with the pride of the days of ignorance, God blessed His messenger and the believers with peaceful contentment and directed them to safeguard their righteousness. This is what they really deserved. God is fully aware of all things.
[48:27] God has fulfilled a truthful promise: You will enter the Sanctioned Submissions, God willing, perfectly secure and you will reflect on this with a free mind and you will not have any fear. Since He knew what you did not know, He has coupled this with a certain victory.
[48:28] He is the One who sent His messenger with this guidance and the Deen of truth, to make it prevail over all other systems. God suffices as a witness.
[48:29] Muhammad: praiseworthy is the messenger of God - and those with him are unyielding and stern against those who reject this guidance, but kind and compassionate amongst themselves. You see them humbly consenting as they seek God's blessings and approval. The mark of certainty is on their faces, because of their submission. This is the same example as in the Taurah, and the example in the Injeel is like plants that grow taller and stronger and please the farmers. But it enrages the disbelievers. God promises those among them who believe and lead a righteous life, protection and a great recompense.[880]

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[878] **God's way:** (Arabic: *sunnatullah*) God's system is constant and does not change. Unchanging principles in changing times: Permanent Values always remain the same. See verse 33:62.
[879] **Disbelievers** have always tried to violate this guidance to frustrate people's understanding. One way was to create traditions to parallel and equal the revealed guidance of God. See verse and footnote 4:42; 7:203; 11:12; 17:73-75; 42:21; 60:2; 69:44-47. See also verses and footnotes 47:26-30. **Sanctioned Submissions:** see verse 2:144.
[880] **Praiseworthy** (Arabic: *muhammadin*). This verse reads: *"Praiseworthy is the messenger of God..."* See verse and footnote 47:2.

Sura 49: The Dwelling (Al-Hujurat)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[49:1] O you who believe, do not be presumptuous about God and His messenger. You shall keep your duty to God. God is Hearer and is aware of all things.
[49:2] O you who believe, do not raise your voices above that of the messenger, nor shall you be obstinate about your opinions as you would be amongst each other, lest your works become nullified while you do not perceive.[881]
[49:3] Surely, those who humble themselves while regarding this message from God are the ones whose hearts are prepared by God to safeguard their righteousness. They have deserved protection and a great recompense.
[49:4] As for those who, to get attention, raise their voices from outside the homes they visit, most of them do not understand.
[49:5] Had they been patient until the inhabitants came out to them, it would have been better for them. God is Protector and Most Merciful.

INVESTIGATE RUMOURS AND SCAREMONGERING

[49:6] O you who believe, if a distrustful person brings any news to you, you shall first investigate, lest you commit injustice towards some people, out of ignorance, then become sorry and remorseful for what you have done.

DON'T MAKE LIFE DIFFICULT FOR YOURSELVES

[49:7] And know that God's messenger has come in your midst. Had he listened to you in many things you would have made life difficult for yourselves. But God made you love the truth and become convinced in your hearts and He made you abhor disbelief, wickedness and disobedience. These are the guided ones.[882]
[49:8] Such is grace from God and His blessings. God is aware of all things and Most Wise.

RECONCILE THE BELIEVERS

[49:9] If two groups of believers are in conflict with each other, you shall reconcile them. If one group aggresses against the other, you shall fight the aggressing group until they surrender to God's decrees. Once they accept, you shall reconcile the two groups equitably. You shall maintain justice. God cares for those who are just.

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[881] **The messenger** is no longer here, so by extension this means the leader and chief administrator of affairs when meetings or assemblies are held. See verses 58:11; 62:9-11; 3:159; 42:38 & 80:42. See also 3:159; 42:38; 58:11; 62:9-11. See also 17:73. **Opinions:** se verse 38:26.

[882] **God decrees** simple disciplines for individuals to develop the Self. So why do people add doctrines, religious rites and rituals to make life difficult? See verses and footnotes 4:42: 68:37.

THE REAL FAMILY

[49:10] The believers are members of one family; you shall keep peace within your family and reverence God, that you may attain mercy.

[49:11] O you who believe, no people shall ridicule other people, for they may be better than they. Nor shall any women ridicule other women, for they may be better than they. Nor shall you mock or ridicule one another or call each other mockingly. Evil indeed is the reversion to wickedness after attaining certainty. Anyone who does not repent after this; these are the transgressors.[883]

SUSPICION WITHOUT CAUSE IS AN OFFENCE

[49:12] O you who believe, you shall avoid any suspicion, for even a small amount of unsupported suspicion is wicked. You shall not spy on one another, nor shall you backbite one another; this is as abominable as eating the flesh of your dead brother. You certainly abhor this. You shall do your duty to God. God is Redeemer and Most Merciful.[884]

THE ONLY CRITERION FOR DISTINGUISHING PEOPLE

[49:13] O people, We created you from the same male and female and rendered you distinct peoples and cultures, that you may recognise one another, but the best among you in the sight of God is the most righteous. God is all-knowing and aware of all things.[885]

MUSLIM AND MU'MIN

[49:14] The Arabs say, "We are mu'mineen: believers." Say: "You have not believed. What you should say is, "We are muslims: submitters," until true conviction is established in your hearts and enriches your lives. If you obey God and His messenger, He will not put any of your works to waste. God is Protector, Most Merciful.[886]

[49:15] Mu'mins are those who have true conviction in God and His messenger then attain the status of having no doubt whatsoever and strive

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[883] **Family:** As far as God is concerned, those who belong to the same family are not necessarily blood relatives, but are those with common values. That is why those who live by the Permanent Values according to the Quran are one family. See verses 9:24; 9:113-114; 11:45-49; 19:41-50; 64:14. **Gossip:** As verse 49:11 shows, gossip, name calling and mocking one another is a wicked act and not appropriate for those who live by the higher Quranic standard of behaviour.

[884] **Suspicion** without cause is a gross offence, as is making false accusations. See verses and footnotes 24:4-20.

[885] **People are different.** Their colour, culture, language, customs, traditions, food, lifestyle etc. None of these things are a hindrance to being a good individual who does his or her duty to God. So to consider one race superior or inferior because of these differences is wrong and an offence.

[886] **Mu'min** (Root M'N. Derivatives: *aamanu, amn*). A person with complete conviction who is at peace because he has successfully resolved his inner and outer conflicts and can face challenges with confidence. See verses and footnotes 22:78; 28:53; 80:42.

with their money and their lives in the cause of God. These are the truthful ones.[887]
[49:16] Say: "Are you informing God about your Deen: the established Order? God knows everything in the heavens and the earth. God is aware of all things."

WHO IS DOING WHO A FAVOUR?

[49:17] They act as if they are doing you a favour by embracing Deen-Islam, the System of Truth. Say: "You are not doing me any favours by embracing this established Order. God is the One who is doing you a great favour by guiding you to certainty and conviction, if you really are sincere."
[49:18] God knows all the secrets in the heavens and the earth; God sees everything you do.[888]

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[887] **God and His messenger:** to have conviction in the Quran: His message, is to have conviction in both, i.e God and His messenger. Now that the messenger is no longer here, accepting and implementing the profound and enduring message he brought shows the believers' true and proper conviction in God and His messenger. See footnote to verse 80:42.

[888] **The Law of Requital:** For the savage, as for the child, the world is a scene of fortuitous events none of which stands in an intelligible relationship with the other. With the growth of intellect, both awake to the presence of order in the world around them. The first thing he notices is the sequence of certain events - for example a flash of lightning is followed by a crash of thunder, and contact with fire is followed by burning. Knowledge of invariable sequence helps them to make better adjustment to the world. He becomes conscious of the causal nexus between events. He seeks to know the causes of events, because this knowledge enables him to predict the effects and also to control them. He becomes aware that he himself operates as a causal agent producing changes in the world. The knowledge that all his actions have consequences gives him a sense of power as well as of responsibility. He realises that in choosing to act in a certain way, He also chooses the consequence of his action. If the consequence is unpleasant and he wishes to avoid it, he can do so only by refraining from the action which leads to it. The Law of Requital states that every action of man has consequences and the doer will have to bear them whether he likes them or not. But far more important than the external effect of the action is its effect on the personality of the doer. All actions, however, do not necessarily modify personality. An action which has been performed inadvertently or carelessly has little influence on an individual's Self. But an action performed deliberately for a set purpose or with a high degree of ego-involvement, changes personality for better or for worse. It strengthens or weakens the moral fibre. It furthers or hinders his progress toward Self-fulfilment and Self-development. This distinction between human actions is made by the Quran and is of great importance to the moral life of man. The Law of Requital is specially relevant to the changes in personality which result from the voluntary actions of an individual. It means that consequences of such actions are inevitably incorporated in his personality, adding to or detracting from its power.

Gradually man realised that he lived in a world which was not at the mercy of capricious spirits, but a world displaying a definite order. He could adjust himself to the world only by discovering and controlling the laws which governed its events and processes. See verses and footnotes 2:31-39. He addressed himself to this task and slowly and patiently acquired the knowledge which enabled him to exercise effective control over the world. Next he turned his attention to himself and to his own conduct. Here too, he discovered the rule of law. He found that he was free to act and choose but that rule of law required him to pay a price for the freedom he enjoyed. He had to

Sura 50: Qaf (Qaf)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[50:1] The letter Q and the glorious Quran: a profound reading.
[50:2] They found it remarkable that a warner came from among them, to caution them. They rejected him and his warnings and said, "This is really impossible.
[50:3] "After we die and become dust we are resurrected? This is incredible."
[50:4] God is fully aware of when any one of them is consumed by the earth. We have an accurate record.
[50:5] They rejected the truth when it came to them. They are utterly confused.
[50:6] Have they not looked at the sky above them and how We constructed it and adorned it, without a flaw?
[50:7] And We created the earth and scattered on it mountains and grew in it all kinds of beautiful plants.
[50:8] This is an enlightenment and a reminder for every devoted servant of God.
[50:9] And We gifted from the sky blessed water to grow flourishing gardens and grains to be harvested.
[50:10] Tall date palms with clustered fruit.
[50:11] Provisions for mankind. And We revive the dead lands, you are similarly thus resurrected.

[50:12] Rejecting Our guidance before them were the people of Noah, the dwellers of Russ and Thamoud.
[50:13] And Aad, Firawn and the family of Lot.
[50:14] And the dwellers of the woods and the people of Tubba. All of them disbelieved the messengers and as a consequence, consistent with My ordinance, retribution befell them.

[50:15] Were We too burdened by the first creation? Is this why they doubt resurrection?
[50:16] We created the human and We know his most innermost thoughts. We are closer to him than his jugular vein.

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bear the consequences of his actions. He could not disown the results of his own actions. He might yield to a sudden impulse and gain momentary satisfaction, but later regret and remorse were sure to prey on his mind and make him unhappy. He could not flout the Law of Requital with impunity. See verses 11:7; 76:2; 94:5 & index: Self, the. This law is as fixed and inexorable as any natural law. However, unlike the natural law which is confined only to the physical spheres. the Law of Requital has far reaching effects. *Continued on footnote to verse. 50:45.*

[50:17] The malaika around him are constantly recording all his deeds.
[50:18] Not a word does he think or speak without a vigilant witness.
[50:19] Then, the inevitable final sleep of death comes. This is what you tried to evade.

[50:20] The signal is given. This is the promised day.
[50:21] Every Self that comes is ushered with their witness.
[50:22] You used to be oblivious to this. We now remove your veil, today your vision is sharp and you are now facing the truth.
[50:23] Your evidence that accompanies you will reveal its formidable testimony.

[50:24] Every stubborn disbeliever who had rejected God's guidance will be drawn into a torment of hell that they had prepared for their Self.
[50:25] The one who hesitated to do good, the one who had transgressed the bounds of guidance, the one full of disbelief, will all be there.
[50:26] He set up besides God other authorities to equal or rival Him. They will be drawn into a retribution most severe.
[50:27] His companion will say, "Our Sustainer, I did not mislead him. He was already far astray."
[50:28] He will respond, "Do not feud now. You received sufficient warnings from Me."
[50:29] "Nothing can now be changed. I am never unjust towards any person."
[50:30] That is the day when We see hell ready to consume without being satisfied.

[50:31] Paradise will be offered to the righteous, readily.
[50:32] This is what was promised to every individual who repented and was steadfast.
[50:33] They fulfilled their duty to the Most Gracious in their privacy and came wholeheartedly without hesitation.
[50:34] Enter it in peace. This is the Day of Eternity.
[50:35] They get anything they wish therein and We have even more.
[50:36] Many a generation before them, who were more powerful, We annihilated. They searched the land, did they find an escape?
[50:37] This should be a lesson for everyone who possesses intelligence or is able to hear and witness.
[50:38] We have created the heavens and the earth and everything between them in six eras and no weakness touched Us.
[50:39] Therefore, be patient in the face of what they say and honour the One who sustains you before sunrise and before sunset.
[50:40] During the night you shall reflect on His guidance and turn to Him.

REMIND WITH THE QURAN BEFORE THE INEVITABLE END

[50:41] Prepare for the day when a caller beckons you from a place that seems very close to you.
[50:42] When you hear the inevitable call, that is the day you come out of your graves.
[50:43] We are the ones who control life and death and to Us is the final return.
[50:44] The day will come when the earth tears asunder with great haste, giving rise to those who were dead. Such summoning is easy for Us to do.
[50:45] We are fully aware of everything they say, while you have no power over them. Therefore, remind them with this Quran, those who keep their duty to God and heed My warnings.[889]

[889] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R. Derivatives *qara'a, qari, iqra*). The messenger is commanded to remind people with the Quran and not any other book. When people deviate: remind them with the Quran and the Quran alone. See verses 6:19; 6:70: 39:23. The Quran is the only criteria for lawmakers and those who seek guidance for the progress and welfare of individuals and societies. See verse and footnote 2:185. Cause and effect are relative terms. Each can be defined only in terms of the other. We are not concerned with cases where both the events are physical - these fall within the scope of physical sciences. But we have seen that man too acts as a causal agent in the world and his actions also produce effects. From the point of view of *deen,* man's actions and their effects are seen as exemplifying the Law of Requital. The effect is what man earns by his action, whether he welcomes it as a reward or dislikes it as a punishment. If a man puts his hand in fire it gets burnt, if he plunges it in water, it gets wet. If he acts wrongly, the consequences are harmful to him. He has to suffer because he has brought the calamity on himself. It is his own doing and he cannot blame others. The child as it grows up, quickly learns how the Law of Requital works in the physical sphere and how, by respecting it, he may protect himself against physical injury and pain. Recite the Quran to remind yourself. See verse 29:45.

The Law of Requital: *(contd. from footnote to 49:18).* In the social sphere, the Law of Requital operates in the form of civil law. Society cannot exist without law and order. Actions which threaten the integrity of society have to be punished. Men often act in an anti-social way. Impelled by selfish desires, they often act in such a manner as to disrupt the group to which they belong. They can be restrained only by the knowledge that their wrong actions will bring upon themselves highly unpleasant consequences. A man may inflict injury on his fellow-being or rob him of his property, but he knows that afterwards he may have to serve time or pay a heavy fine. The prospect of suffering punishment deters him from acting against the interest of society. In a well-organised society men are usually law-abiding because they see that everyone who transgresses the law is invariably punished. However, we must not forget that even in a well-governed state, some criminals go unpunished while some innocent men are unjustly condemned. Human laws are not perfect and there are, in every society, serious defects in the administration of justice. Cunning men, especially if they are wealthy, can often find some way of evading the punishment which they deserve. That is why every society has its criminals. The only remedy lies in perfecting the machinery of the administration of justice. Thus we see that the Law of Requital does operate in the social sphere, although its working is not free from defects. *Continued after footnote to verse 51:60.*

Sura 51: The Winds (Al-Dhariyat)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[51:1] The blowing winds,
[51:2] Bearing rain.
[51:3] Bringing provisions.
[51:4] Distributing in consistence with His ordinance.
[51:5] What is promised to you will surely come to pass.
[51:6] The Day of your accountability is inevitable.
[51:7] Despite the perfectly created sky.
[51:8] You continue to dispute the truth.
[51:9] Conflicting from this guidance are the deviators.
[51:10] Misery to those who fabricate and conjecture.[890]
[51:11] In their blundering they are totally heedless.
[51:12] They question the established Order for what they should do.
[51:13] The day they are surrounded by an inferno of their irresponsible behaviour.
[51:14] Taste the punishment. This is what you used to beckon.
[51:15] The righteous have deserved gardens and springs.
[51:16] They receive their Sustainer's rewards, for they remember their duty to God.
[51:17] They go to sleep in remembrance of His guidance.
[51:18] At dawn, they seek protection for the coming day.
[51:19] A portion of their money is set aside for the destitute and the needy.
[51:20] The earth is full of signs for those who are certain.
[51:21] And there are signs within yourselves: can you see?
[51:22] In the heaven is your provision and everything that is promised to you.
[51:23] By the Sustainer of the heavens and the earth, this is as true as any reality that surrounds you.

[51:24] Have you noted the history of Abraham's honourable guests?[891]
[51:25] They visited him, saying, "Salamun: Peace." He said, "Salamun: Peace, to you strangers."[892]
[51:26] He asked his family to prepare a fat calf for their meal.
[51:27] When he offered it to them, he remarked, "Do you not eat?"
[51:28] He became fearful of them. They said, "Do not be frightened," and they gave him good news of a knowledgeable son.

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[890] **Fabricated** guidance is anything that contradicts this revealed guidance of God in the Quran including all religious doctrine and innovations that go against the these teachings.
[891] **History:** (Arabic: *hadith*). See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.
[892] **Peace:** (Arabic*: salamun*). Greetings of peace. See verse and footnote 6:54.

[51:29] His wife was astonished and disbelieved. Noting her aged and wrinkled face, she said: "Do you know that I am an old woman?"
[51:30] They said, "Thus decreed your Sustainer. He is the most wise and He is aware of all things.
[51:31] He said, "What are you up to, O messengers?"
[51:32] They said, "We have been dispatched to some corrupt people.
[51:33] "We will start an avalanche of rocks on them.
[51:34] "Marked by your Sustainer for the transgressors."
[51:35] We then delivered all the believers.
[51:36] We did not find any except in one house.
[51:37] We set it up as a lesson for those who fear punishment as a consequence of their wrongdoing.

[51:38] In Moses' history there is a lesson for those who believe. We sent him to Firawn with manifest signs.
[51:39] But he turned away in arrogance and said, "You are a spellbinder or a man possessed."
[51:40] Consequently, We punished him and his troops. We drowned them in the river and he is the one to blame for his own actions.

[51:41] In Aad's history there is a lesson for those who believe. We sent upon them disastrous wind,
[51:42] whatever it came upon was utterly destroyed.
[51:43] In Thamoud's history there is a lesson for those who believe. They were told, "Enjoy temporarily."
[51:44] They rebelled against the power of their Sustainer. Consequently, the lightning struck them as they looked.
[51:45] They could never get up and neither could they be helped.[893]
[51:46] And the people of Noah before that: they were wicked people.

EXPANSION OF THE UNIVERSE

[51:47] We constructed the heavens and We continue to expand it.
[51:48] And We made the earth habitable; a perfect design.
[51:49] We created a pair, a male and a female of everything, that you may take heed.[894]
[51:50] You shall seek refuge with God. This message is the revealed guidance sent by Him to you as a manifest warning.
[51:51] Do not set up besides God any other authority to rival or equal Him. This message is the revealed guidance sent by Him to you as a clear warning.

[893] **The universe** is expanding and once a limit is reached it will contract and implode. See Verse 21:104; 69:16. See also 16:69; 20:53; 52:6; 53:46; 53:49.
[894] **Everything** created has an aspect that is male and a female: a positive and a negative.

[51:52] Consistently, when a messenger went to the previous generations, they said: "This is a deceiver or a man insane."
[51:53] Did they make an agreement with each other? Indeed, they are transgressors.
[51:54] You may disregard them, you cannot be blamed.
[51:55] And remind them, for a reminder benefits the believers.

PURPOSE OF CREATION

[51:56] I did not create the invisible and the visible except to serve Me alone.[895]
[51:57] I need no provisions from them, neither do I need them to feed Me.
[51:58] God is the Provider, the Possessor of all power, the Supreme.
[51:59] The transgressors have incurred the same fate as their previous counterparts; they should not challenge this guidance.
[51:60] Misery to those who disbelieve in the day that is awaiting them.

[895] **Everything** that we can see and everything we cannot see, serves God. Mankind serves God by following His guidance and this helps discipline, strengthen and develop the Self in preparation for the life yet to come in this evolutionary procession that this universe is a part of.

The Law of Requital: *contd. from footnote to 50:45.* In the moral sphere, the Law of Requital is seen in its purest form. Here it points to the necessary connection between man's action and the ensuing modification of his personality. Man's action, besides producing effects in the world and in society, also produces effects within him, changing his Self for better or worse. External factors have no effect on a man's personality. Man can be free although he is confined in a prison cell. On the other hand, though outwardly free, he may have a cramped and inhibited personality. Human personality is keenly sensitive to the moral tone of his actions. Every transgression of the moral law debilitates it in its ability to play its proper role. The working of the Law of Requital is much more subtle in this sphere than in other spheres. A man may casually take a wrong turning and may go on committing trivial misdeeds, without being aware of the gradual harm he is doing to his personality. One day, he will be shocked when he realises the cumulative deterioration in his personality. Though subtle, the working of the Law of Requital in this sphere is relentless. Every action leaves its effect, good or bad, on the personality. The effect at a time may be so slight as to be hardly perceptible, but if the man continues to act in the wrong way, the cumulative effect may transform his personality. The infection of bad actions may be negligible at the beginning but it works insidiously and gradually undermines the Self. The man who is morally sensitive can perceive this effect coming about and check himself in time and retrace his steps before any irreparable damage can be done. All our actions are not subject to the Law of Requital. Involuntary acts and those performed heedlessly or with little ego-involvement may be regarded as morally neutral. But deliberate acts, through which we express our real Self and which can acknowledge as our own, are inevitably rewarded if right, and punished if wrong. The moral order in the universe is based on this law. We can claim only what is due to us. Only right actions entitle us to reward. See verses and footnotes 1:5; 2:254.

Sura 52: The Mount Sinai (Al-Toor)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[52:1] By the Mount Sinai.
[52:2] And this inscribed guidance
[52:3] Which is presented as a book,
[52:4] And the living System that encompasses everything.[896]
[52:5] The exalted covering of essential matters.
[52:6] The deep sea that remains filled.[897]
[52:7] Consequences from your Sustainer are unavoidable.
[52:8] No force in the universe can stop them.
[52:9] The day will come when the sky will violently thunder.
[52:10] The mountains will be wiped out.
[52:11] Misery on that day to the disbelievers.
[52:12] Who are in their blundering, heedless.
[52:13] They will be drawn into a hell with compelling ease.
[52:14] This is the inferno in that which you used to deny.
[52:15] Is this an illusion or do you not see?
[52:16] Suffer the burning. Whether you are tolerant or impatient, it will be the same for you. This is just punishment for what you did.

[52:17] The righteous have deserved peace and security.
[52:18] They enjoy what their Sustainer has reserved for them. Their Sustainer has spared them any torment.
[52:19] Eat and drink happily in return for your works.
[52:20] They relax without grief or anxiety and with companions most good-natured.

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[896] **Life,** to give life, sustenance: (Arabic: *amr*. Root M'R to prosper, sustain or flourish). See verse and footnote 9:18.

[897] **Sea and land:** The ratio of the appearances of the words 'sea' and 'land' in the Quran is identical to the ratio between sea and land discovered by modern science. The continents had not yet been discovered at the time the Quran was revealed, and it was then impossible to determine the ratio between the land and sea. Even such large continents as the Americas were only discovered by Europeans in the 15th century. The word 'land' appears 13 times in the Quran, while 'sea' appears 32 times. These numbers total 45. If we divide the number of references to land in the Quran, 13, by 45, the result is 28.9%. When we divide the number of references to sea in the Quran, 32, by 45, the result is 71.1%. these ratios are the exact ones that apply between water and dry land on Earth. The repetition of these words in the Quran is a statement that the Earth is 71% covered in water and 29% in dry land. It has only been possible to arrive at this ratio in the present day, and only because of the availability of satellite photos and computer calculations. See Quran Self Reference in the Prologue section.

[52:21] For those who believed and their children also followed them in belief, We will have their righteous children join them. We never fail to reward them for any good work. Every person is paid for what he did.
[52:22] We will provide them with all the things they love.
[52:23] They will celebrate untainted lives that are never blemished with guilt or depravity.
[52:24] They will be served by honourable persons.
[52:25] They will meet each other and reminisce among themselves.
[52:26] They will say, "Among our people We used to be anxious about our future.
[52:27] "God has blessed us and has spared us the agony of ill winds.
[52:28] "We used to implore Him; He is the Most Kind and the Most Merciful."
[52:29] You shall remind all the people. With your Sustainer's blessings upon you, you are neither a mystic nor a man insane.[898]
[52:30] They may say, "He is a poet; let us just wait until he is dead."
[52:31] Say: "Go on waiting; I will wait along with you."
[52:32] Is it that they are deliberately vicious in their behaviour or are they just outrageous people?
[52:33] Do they say, "He made it all up?" Whatever the reason, they simply reject this guidance.
[52:34] Let them produce a hadith; a message like this, if they are truthful.[899]
[52:35] Were they created from nothing? Are they the creators?
[52:36] Did they create the heavens and the earth? Indeed, they have no certainty.
[52:37] Do they possess the treasures of your Sustainer? Are they in control?

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[898] **Mysticism** of any description has no place in the Deen-Islam, the dynamic living System that engages people in the practicalities of this world to develop their Self for the coming life. *"Muhammad of Arabia ascended the highest Heaven and returned. I swear by God that if I had reached that point, I should never have returned."* These are the words of a revered Sufi saint, Abdul Quddus of Gangoh. In the whole range of Sufi literature, it will probably be difficult to find words which, in a single sentence, disclose such an acute perception of the psychological difference between the messenger of God and the mystic types of consciousness. The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of 'unitary experience', and when he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large. The messenger's 'return' from receiving the inspiration of revelation is creative. He returns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to control the forces of history, and thereby to create a fresh world based on dynamic ideals. For the mystic, the repose of 'unitary experience' is something final, for the messenger it is an awakening within him of world-shaking psychological forces, calculated to completely transform the human world into something much better and greater than it is, the ideal aspiration for all those who believe in this guidance. This is why mysticism and all that goes with it has no place in Deen-Islam. See verses 4:65; 7:75; 57:27; 33:62; 69:42.

[899] **Hadith:** message. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.

[52:38] Do they climb a ladder that enables them to listen in to the heavens? Let the listeners show their clear proofs.
[52:39] Does God have daughters, while you have sons?
[52:40] Are you asking them for any payment that causes them hardship?
[52:41] Do they know the future and have it recorded?
[52:42] Are they plotting and scheming? The disbelievers' schemes backfire against them.
[52:43] Do they have another authority to rank with God? God be glorified, far above having partners.
[52:44] When they see masses falling from the sky, they will say, "The clouds are falling on us!"
[52:45] Disregard them until they meet the day in which they are struck.
[52:46] On that day, their schemes will not protect them nor will they be helped.
[52:47] Those who transgress also suffer retribution here, but most of them do not know.
[52:48] You shall steadfastly persevere in carrying out your Sustainer's command. We see you, so glorify and praise your Sustainer when you rise from your sleep.
[52:49] Also during the night honour Him, and at dawn as the stars fade away.

Sura 53: The Stars (Al-Najm)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[53:1] By the stars as they move along in their path of orbit.
[53:2] Your friend, the messenger was not astray nor was he deceived.
[53:3] Nor was he speaking out of any personal desire.
[53:4] This guidance was revealed as divine inspiration.
[53:5] Inspired by the One Most Powerful.
[53:6] Possessor of all authority from His most eminent position.
[53:7] Beyond the highest horizon.
[53:8] He drew nearer by moving down.
[53:9] Until they became as close like two bows.
[53:10] He then revealed to His servant this guidance.
[53:11] The mind never improvised what was revealed.
[53:12] Are you doubting what he saw?
[53:13] He saw him in another descent.
[53:14] At the ultimate point.
[53:15] Where there is eternal peace and security.
[53:16] And everything is overwhelming.
[53:17] The eyes did not waver, nor go blind.
[53:18] He saw great signs of his Sustainer.
[53:19] Compare this with the female idols Allaat and Al-Uzzah.
[53:20] And Manaat, the third one.
[53:21] Do you have sons, while He has these as daughters?
[53:22] What a disgraceful attribution to God.
[53:23] These are but names that you made up, you and your forefathers. God never authorised such a blasphemy. They follow conjecture and personal desire, when the true guidance has come to them herein from their Sustainer.[900]
[53:24] What is it that the human being desires?
[53:25] To God belongs both the Hereafter and this world.
[53:26] Not even the malaika in heavens possess authority to intercede. The only ones permitted a better status by God are those who act in accordance with His ordinance and His approval.
[53:27] Those who disbelieve in the Hereafter have given the malaika feminine names.[901]
[53:28] They have no knowledge about this, they only conjecture. Conjecture is no substitute for the truth.

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[900] **The majority** of people follow not the guidance in the Quran but conjecture, they follow without understanding. See verses and footnotes 10:36; 10:39. See also verses 4:42; 68:37.
[901] **Angel:** Those who have no proper knowledge believe the malaika to be female angels. See verse and footnote 2:30; 6:8.

[53:29] You shall disregard those who turn away from Our message and become preoccupied with this worldly life.
[53:30] This is the extent of their knowledge. Your Sustainer is fully aware of those who moved away from His path and He is fully aware of those who are guided.
[53:31] To God belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth. He will punish those who commit evil for their works and will reward the righteous for their good works.
[53:32] They avoid gross offences and transgressions, except for minor lapses that are oversights. Your Sustainer's protection is tremendous. He is fully aware of you since it is He who initiated you from clay and knew you while you were jinn: concealed within the wombs of your mothers. Therefore, do not exalt yourselves; He is fully aware of the righteous.[902]
[53:33] Have you noted the one who turned away?
[53:34] Rarely did he spend for the good of others and then only grudgingly.
[53:35] Did he possess knowledge of the future? Could he see it?
[53:36] Was he not informed of the teachings in the scripture of Moses?
[53:37] And Abraham who fulfilled his duty?
[53:38] No Self bears the guilt of another Self.[903]
[53:39] Every being achieves nothing except the result of his own works.
[53:40] And everyone's works will become apparent.
[53:41] Then they will be paid fully for such works.
[53:42] To your Sustainer is the final end.
[53:43] He is the One who makes you laugh or cry.

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[902] **Concealed,** hidden, invisible, out of sight, veiled. (Arabic: jinn Root: J'N'N)**.** Anything that is not visible is in fact a 'jinn'. The word '*jinn*' here is used for an unborn human being, described here as 'concealed'. See verses and footnotes 6:128; 15:32; 16:78; 18:50; 72:1.

[903] **No person** can be punished for the crimes of another. This negates the Christian doctrine of 'original sin' where the state of sin is held to be innate in mankind as the descendents of Adam and Eve who ate the forbidden food. No child, let alone generations of innocent people, can be held responsible for the wrongdoings of a forefather. Every person bears the responsibility for his own actions. No person will bear the burden of wrongdoings of his parents, leaders and priests, he will be accountable only for his own works. Of course, if he chooses to follow misguided parents, corrupt leaders or charlatan priests, then he will be answerable for this, and they will be responsible for their part. **Transgression** is the violation of laws or principles in the Quran. Every action that weakens the Self is a transgression and a crime against the Self. This includes crimes that stimulate a person's spirit of defiance and prompt the individual to transgress beyond the limits of God's law. The prevailing concept of 'sin against God' does not exist within the Deen-Islamic code of ethics. The notion that any 'sinful' action a person undertakes has any detrimental effect on God is a fallacy. In an Islamic society under the Quranic injunctions rules out the duality between laws and injunctions of God and those of society. This kind of duality is conceivable only in religion not in Deen. The Deen-Islam is a holistic socio-economic system based on Quranic principles. See verse and footnote 95:4.

[53:44] He is the One who controls death and life.
[53:45] He is the One who created the two kinds: male and female
[53:46] from a tiny drop of semen emitted.[904]
[53:47] His ordinance will determine the recreation.
[53:48] He is the One who makes you rich or poor.
[53:49] He is the Sustainer of the Sirius.[905]
[53:50] He is the One who annihilated ancient Aad.
[53:51] And wiped out Thamoud.
[53:52] Also the people of Noah before that: they were evil transgressors.
[53:53] The evil communities who were the lowliest.
[53:54] Consequently, they utterly vanished.
[53:55] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[53:56] This is a warning like the previous warnings.
[53:57] The inevitable is imminent.
[53:58] None besides God can relieve it.
[53:59] Are you questioning this Hadith: the message from God?[906]
[53:60] Are you laughing, instead of crying?
[53:61] Are you insisting on your own ways?
[53:62] You shall concede to God's guidance and serve Him.

[904] **It is the semen** that determines whether the baby is male or female. Sex is determined by two chromosomes, X and Y. A female is XX, a male is XY. Since women completely lack the Y chromosome, they always contribute an X chromosome to the baby. The sex is determined by whether the sperm that fertilizes the egg is carrying another X or a Y. A fact firmly established by science today and could not have been in general knowledge at the time of the Quran's revelation.

[905] **Sirius:** The fact that the word "Sirius," (Arabic: *shi'ra*) appears only in the 49th verse is particularly noteworthy. Because, based on the irregularities in Sirius' orbit, scientists have discovered it is actually a binary star. Therefore, Sirius is actually two stars, known as Sirius A and Sirius B. The stars in Sirius system follow a course toward one another in the shape of a bow, and orbit by approaching each another every 49.9 years. These scientific data have been confirmed by the astronomy scientists at the universities of Harvard, Ottawa and Leicester. Yet this fact only emerged toward the end of the 20th century and has been referred to in the Quran since its revelation. Read verses 9 and 49 of this Sura together. See Quran Self Reference in the Prologue section.

[906] **Message:** (Arabic: *hadith*). God invites you to believe in His hadith, this Quran and reject all other hadith that people have set up to rival, equal or complement this revelation. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.

Sura 54: The Moon (Al-Qamar)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[54:1] The end as it comes closer, the moon will cleave apart.
[54:2] They saw a sign, but they turned away and said, "This is an illusion."
[54:3] They disbelieved, followed their own opinions and held on to their old traditions.
[54:4] Sufficient warnings have been delivered to alert them.
[54:5] Great knowledge has been imparted to them, but their apparent maturity and wisdom proves to be useless.
[54:6] Ignore them. The day will come when a signal will announce a terrible disaster.
[54:7] With their eyes humiliated, they come out of the graves like multitudes of crawling insects.
[54:8] As they respond to the signal, the disbelievers will say, "This is a difficult day."

NOAH: A LESSON FROM HISTORY

[54:9] Before them the people of Noah disbelieved. They rejected Our servant and said, "He is a man gone mad!" He was persecuted.
[54:10] He implored his Sustainer, "I am oppressed by these people. Grant me victory."
[54:11] We then opened the gates of the sky pouring water.
[54:12] And We caused springs to gush out of the earth. The waters met to effect a determination according to Our ordinance.
[54:13] We carried him on a watercraft made of logs and ropes.[907]
[54:14] It sailed under Our watchful eyes, a protection for the one who was rejected.
[54:15] We set this as an awesome lesson. Do any of you wish to learn?
[54:16] How terrible was My retribution after the warnings?
[54:17] We made this Quran a reminder, easy for you. Have any of you learned anything?[908]

AAD: CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REJECTERS

[54:18] The community of Aad rejected the guidance. Consequently, how terrible was My retribution after the warnings?

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[907] **The 'ark'** which Noah built was a small craft with enough capacity to carry his family, his livestock and some neighbouring people. The flood was a local devastation of a storm which poured for some time, and when the sun came out the earth absorbed the water very quickly. see verses and footnotes 11:32; 54:13-17.

[908] **The Quran,** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). Four verses in this Sura/ chapter repeat the same message: This Quran is easy, the guidance uniquely important, why don't you apply it? See verses: 54:22,32,40. See verse and footnote 2:185.

[54:19] We sent upon them violent winds on a day of continuous misery.
[54:20] It tossed all the people around as if they were decayed palm tree trunks.
[54:21] How terrible was My retribution after the warnings?
[54:22] We made this Quran a reminder, easy for you. Have any of you learned anything?

COMMUNITY OF THAMOUD TESTED

[54:23] The community of Thamoud rejected the warnings.
[54:24] They said, "Shall We follow one of us: a human being? We will then go astray and end up in hell.
[54:25] "Did the message come down to him, instead of us? He is a brazen liar."
[54:26] They found out the next day who the flagrant liar was.
[54:27] We sent a camel as a test for them. Watch them and be patient.
[54:28] Inform them that the water shall be divided among them, and the camel shall be allowed to drink on her designated day.
[54:29] But they persuaded their friend to kill the camel and he obliged.[909]
[54:30] Consequently, how terrible was My retribution? They had been warned.
[54:31] We sent upon them one blow, whereupon they became like harvested hay.
[54:32] We made this Quran a reminder, easy for you. Have any of you learned anything?

LOT SAVED FROM CORRUPT PEOPLE

[54:33] The people of Lot rejected the warnings.
[54:34] An avalanche of rocks destroyed them. Only Lot's family was saved at dawn.
[54:35] We blessed him and his family; We thus reward the appreciative.
[54:36] He warned them about Our punishment, but they ridiculed the warnings.
[54:37] They tried to coerce him about his guests. We blinded them. Suffer My retribution. You have been warned.
[54:38] Early the next morning, a devastating retribution struck them.
[54:39] Suffer My retribution. You had been warned.
[54:40] We made this Quran a reminder, easy for you. Have any of you learned anything?

[909] **Camel:** this was a test and symbol of self-discipline. See verse and footnote 91:14.

FIRAWN WARNED BEFORE RETRIBUTION

[54:41] Firawn's people were warned.
[54:42] They rejected all Our signs. Consequently, We punished them as the Almighty and All-powerful should.
[54:43] Are your disbelievers better than previous ones who rejected the guidance? Have you been absolved by Our decree?
[54:44] Perhaps they think, "We will be the victorious ones."
[54:45] All of them will be defeated; they will turn around and flee.
[54:46] The End is awaiting them and the End is far worse and more painful.
[54:47] Certainly, the guilty are astray and will end up in hell.
[54:48] They will be drawn into the fury of hell, forcibly. Suffer the agony of retribution.
[54:49] Everything We created in precise proportion and measure.[910]
[54:50] Our commands are executed instantly.
[54:51] We annihilated your counterparts. Do any of you wish to learn?
[54:52] Everything they did is recorded.
[54:53] Everything, small or large, is captured in a manifest record.
[54:54] Surely, the righteous have deserved peace and security.
[54:55] In a position of honour, with the All-powerful Owner of all the domains.[911]

[910] **The signs of God** are evident in the world and the universe. For example the Fibonacci sequence/spiral is apparent in petals, leaves and in the orbit of the galaxies. This can only be by design and not accident. As Galileo commented: "Mathematics is the language with which God has written the universe." The Golden Mean [a/b=(a+b)/a=1.618] is a ratio that occurs frequently in natural patterns: plants, human body etc. and used by architects, painters and designers to create balance and beauty. Another example is the DNA code, a language much more complex but written not unlike the Morse code, with a minimum number of characters, yet it carries all the necessary genetic information. Another product of precision and proportionate measure with the mark of an intelligent designer, creator principal, whom we call God. **Intelligent design:** see verses 7:201; 68:52.

[911] **These are lessons** from history - is anyone ready to learn? The consequences of rejecting good advice are severe. People throughout history have repeated mistakes over and over again. The Quran provides the best guidance without trial and error. It is said that insanity is doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting different results. God has made the Quran an easy reminder. Has anyone learned from it? See verse and footnote 41:53.

Sura 55: The Most Merciful (Al-Rahmaan)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[55:1] The Most Merciful.[912]
[55:2] The One who teaches the Quran.[913]
[55:3] The One who created the human beings.
[55:4] He taught them how to distinguish right from wrong.[914]
[55:5] The sun and the moon with perfectly calculated movements.
[55:6] The stars and the trees concede to His ordinance.
[55:7] He constructed the sky with a just balance.
[55:8] You shall not transgress the limits prescribed.
[55:9] You shall establish justice. Do not violate the law.
[55:10] He created the earth for all creatures.
[55:11] In it there are fruits and date palms with their hanging fruit.
[55:12] Also grains and spices.
[55:13] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?

[55:14] He created the human from clay.[915]
[55:15] And created some hidden elements from an inferno.
[55:16] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:17] Sustainer of both the East and the West.
[55:18] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:19] He separates the two seas of freshwater and saltwater,
[55:20] With an invisible barrier that is placed between them to prevent them from merging.
[55:21] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:22] Out of both of them you get pearls and coral.
[55:23] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:24] He gave you ships that roam the sea like flags.
[55:25] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:26] Everyone on earth perishes.
[55:27] Only the presence of your Sustainer lasts. Possessor of Majesty and Honour.

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[912] **God is merciful:** his mercy manifests, not by absolving a person's sins but in providing the means to protect, heal or supply the means for progressing a useful life. The balm we put on our wounds, the earth's atmosphere preventing harmful light from reaching us, the water to grow our food: all these gifts are mercies from God. See verses and footnotes 1:2; 3:132; 6:54; 10:21; 11:119; 12:38; 21:109.

[913] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R). It is God who teaches the Quran to those who sincerely seek true guidance. Anyone who reads the Quran is the recipient of the revelation and is a witness to the truth. See verses and footnote 2:185.

[914] **Our conscience** helps us to distinguish right from wrong. See verse and footnote 7:172.

[915] **Clay,** not the substance we see today but the mineral-rich primordial soup that was the basis for the type of crystal-based 'life' form. See verses and footnotes 3:59; 36:82.

[55:28] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:29] Imploring Him is everyone in the heavens and the earth. Every day He is in full control.
[55:30] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:31] We will call you all to account, prominent beings and hidden creations.
[55:32] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?

[55:33] O you undistinguished beings and prominent beings, if you can penetrate the outer limits of the heavens and the earth, go ahead and penetrate. You cannot penetrate without approval.[916]
[55:34] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:35] You get bombarded with projectiles of fire and smoke and you cannot be victorious.
[55:36] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:37] When the sky disintegrates and turns rose-coloured.
[55:38] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:39] On that day no undistinguished and prominent beings will be asked about their faults, everything will become self-evident.
[55:40] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:41] This is because the guilty will be recognised by their looks. They will be drawn by their forelocks and their feet.
[55:42] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:43] This is the hell that the guilty used to deny.
[55:44] They will circulate between it and in an intolerable inferno.
[55:45] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?

[55:46] For those who do their duty to honour the status of their Sustainer, both peace and security will be theirs.[917]
[55:47] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:48] Full of provisions without end.
[55:49] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:50] Two springs are in them, flowing.
[55:51] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:52] Of every fruit in them, two of kind.
[55:53] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:54] While relaxing in peace and security, everything they want within reach.
[55:55] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?

[916] **This refers** to space travel: modern and future. Will mankind be able to penetrate the outer limits of the universe?
[917] **Status:** (Arabic: *maqam*). Be aware of your Sustainer's status and respond accordingly by fulfilling your obligations, because to Him is your final accountability. See verse and footnote 2:125.

[55:56] With companions, for the prominent and not so prominent beings, unlike anyone they have ever met before.
[55:57] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:58] They are exceptionally honourable.
[55:59] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:60] Is the reward for decency anything but goodness?
[55:61] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?

[55:62] Below them are two gardens of peace and security.
[55:63] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:64] Side by side.
[55:65] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:66] In them, two abundant springs.
[55:67] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:68] In them are fruits, date palms and pomegranates.
[55:69] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:70] In them are beautiful companions.
[55:71] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:72] Within dwellings.
[55:73] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:74] They look exceptionally admirable.
[55:75] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?
[55:76] They relax in beautiful surroundings.
[55:77] Which of your Sustainer's marvels can you deny?[918]
[55:78] Most exalted is the name of your Sustainer, Possessor of all Majesty and Honour.

[918] **The marvels** of the universe are a benevolence from God, designed in perfection for the benefit of all people - truly God's gift to mankind.

Sura 56: The Inevitable (Al-Waaqi'ah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[56:1] When the inevitable comes to pass.
[56:2] Nothing can stop it from happening.
[56:3] It will lower the position of some and raise the position of others.
[56:4] The earth will be shaken up.
[56:5] The mountains will be wiped out.
[56:6] As if they never existed.
[56:7] You will be stratified into three kinds, including[919]
[56:8] Those who deserve peace and security.
[56:9] Those who deserve turmoil in hell.

THE MOST DEVELOPED SELF

[56:10] Then there will be the select few.
[56:11] They are those who will be the most developed.[920]
[56:12] In the gardens of pleasure.
[56:13] Many from the first generations.
[56:14] Few from the later generations.
[56:15] In a state of luxury and delight.
[56:16] Enjoying everything with their companions.
[56:17] Endless service provided by excellent servants.
[56:18] With cups, pitchers and pure drinks.
[56:19] They never run out nor do they become weary.
[56:20] Fruits of their choice.
[56:21] Meats that they desire.
[56:22] Beautiful companions.
[56:23] Protected and pure.
[56:24] These are the rewards for your works.
[56:25] They never hear any nonsense therein or any vain utterances.
[56:26] Only words of "Salamun: Peace and nothing but harmony."

[919] **This Sura** deals with the description of heaven and hell and, as these are allegorical, they should not be taken literally. These descriptions are simplified for our understanding. How people are categorised according to their development and the evaluation system used is unknown to us.

[920] **People** who believe and nourish their Self through serving God alone will be assigned a status according to their level of discipline maintained and the sacrifices made during their life on earth. The contemporary followers of each messenger invariably suffer persecution from their community and adherents of the religion in vogue. Thus, they have a status according to the self-sacrifice they made during their time.

THE DEVELOPED SELF

[56:27] Those of the right side, will be gathered together.
[56:28] To enjoy lush orchards.
[56:29] Fragrant fruits.
[56:30] Extended shade.
[56:31] Abundant water.
[56:32] Many fruits.
[56:33] Never-ending, never restricted.
[56:34] Luxurious and delightful.
[56:35] We create for them companions.
[56:36] Never previously touched.
[56:37] Perfectly matched.
[56:38] For those on the right side.
[56:39] Many from the early generations.
[56:40] Many from the later generations.

AN INFERNO OF THEIR OWN MAKING

[56:41] Those of the left, will be the losers.
[56:42] In misery and inferno.
[56:43] Even their shade is hot.
[56:44] Never cool, never tolerable.
[56:45] They used to be rich.
[56:46] They insisted on great blasphemies.
[56:47] They said, "After we die and turn to dust and bones, do we get resurrected?
[56:48] "Does this include our forefathers?"
[56:49] Say: "The early generations and the later generations.
[56:50] "Will be summoned to a meeting on a predetermined day.
[56:51] "Then you the rejecters of this guidance who have strayed.
[56:52] "Will eat from the trees of bitterness.
[56:53] "Filling your bellies therefrom.
[56:54] "Then drinking on top of it hellish drinks.
[56:55] "Then adding drinks with sand."
[56:56] Such is their share according to the established Order.

REFLECT ON THE CREATIONS OF GOD

[56:57] We have created you, if you could only believe.
[56:58] Have you noted the semen that the males produce?
[56:59] Did you create it or did We?
[56:60] We have an inevitable death for you. Nothing can stop Us
[56:61] From substituting new generations in your place and establishing what you do not know.
[56:62] Do you know about the first creation. Do you not remember?

[56:63] Have you noted the crops you reap?
[56:64] Did you grow them or did We?
[56:65] If We will, We can turn it into useless hay. Then you will lament:
[56:66] "We are lost.
[56:67] "We are deprived."
[56:68] Have you noted the water you drink?
[56:69] Did you bring it down from the clouds or did We send it?
[56:70] If We will, We can make it salty. You should be thankful.
[56:71] Have you noted the fire you ignite?
[56:72] Did you initiate for it the trees or did We?
[56:73] We rendered it a reminder and a useful tool for the users.
[56:74] You shall glorify the name of your Sustainer, the Great.

FOLLOW THE QURAN

[56:75] I swear by the submissions of the stars.
[56:76] This is an oath, if you only knew, that it is awesome. [921]
[56:77] This is an honourable Quran.
[56:78] Guidance in a protected book.
[56:79] None can perceive it's true value except the sincere.
[56:80] A revelation from the Sustainer of the universe.
[56:81] Are you rejecting this Hadith: My message?[922]
[56:82] Do you make it your priority that you disbelieve?
[56:83] When the term is completed and your Self proceeds to depart,
[56:84] You will then look around.
[56:85] We are closer to it than you are, but you do not see.
[56:86] If it is true that you are not accountable
[56:87] then why do you not restore your Self, if you are truthful?
[56:88] If he is one of those close to Me,
[56:89] then pleasure, flowers and gardens of harmony will be his.
[56:90] And if he is one of the right,
[56:91] peace is the lot of those on the right.
[56:92] But if he is one of the rejecters and the one who has strayed
[56:93] then an abode of inferno
[56:94] and burning in hell is his.
[56:95] This is the absolute truth.
[56:96] You shall honour the name of your Sustainer, the Great.

[921] **The numerous** heavenly bodies maintain their orbits and movements in divinely controlled precision. The more we understand, the more we realise how awesome this oath really is.
[922] **Message** (Arabic: *hadith*). The Quran is God's hadith revealed to guide mankind. [Verse 39:23]. Those who accept profane hadith are in fact rejecting the Quran as a complete and detailed guidance - even though they may profess to follow it. They are in fact committing 'shirk': treachery. This is because they have accepted an authority to rank with God. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.

Sura 57: The Iron (Al-Hadeed)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[57:1] Glorifying God is everything in the heavens and the earth. He is the Almighty and Most Wise.[923]
[57:2] To Him belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He controls life and death. He has power over all things.
[57:3] He is the first and the last. He is the Outermost and the Innermost. He is the One who knows all things.
[57:4] He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six eras, then assumed all authority over them. He knows everything that enters into the earth and everything that comes out of it and everything that comes down from the sky and everything that climbs up to it. He is with you wherever you may be. God is the One who sees everything you do.
[57:5] To Him belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. All matters are controlled by God.
[57:6] He merges the night into the day and merges the day into the night. He is fully aware of your innermost thoughts.

SPEND FOR SOCIAL WELFARE

[57:7] Believe in God and His message of guidance and give from what He has bestowed upon you. Those among you who believe and spend for the good of social welfare have deserved a great recompense.
[57:8] Why should you not believe in God when this message is inviting you to believe in the guidance of your Sustainer? He has taken a pledge of accountability from you, if you are believers.[924]
[57:9] He is the One who sent down to His servant clear revelations, in order to lead you out of the darkness and into the light. God is compassionate towards you and Most Merciful.
[57:10] Why do you not spend in the cause of God, when God possesses all wealth in the heavens and the earth? Distinguished from the rest are those among you who spend and strive before any victory. They attain a greater status than those who spend after victory and strive. For each, God promises salvation. God is aware of everything you do.[925]

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[923] **How does everything glorify God?** Honouring God or glorifying Him does not take place by songs of praise or indeed any ritual prayer but by following his laws and guidance. Even the free-willed human is subject to His physical laws and must breathe, bleed and answer the call of nature and consequently submits to His laws and thus glorifies God. Willingly following and implementing His guidance is the highest form of honouring God. See verses and footnotes 57:1; 59:24.

[924] **Pledge:** promise, covenant. We all have a contract with God. See verses 5:1-7; 7:172; 48:10; 76:7. See also verse 9:111.

[925] **Salvation** for those who follow this guidance, unlike the religious concept, is not the regaining of a state of bliss which was forfeited through 'original sin', but a positive achievement; the acquisition of a new value. Each individual creates a new paradise by realising his or her

[57:11] Who would like to lend God a loan of righteousness to have it multiplied for him manifold and end up with a generous recompense?
[57:12] The day will come when you see the believing men and women with their lights radiating ahead of them and to their right. Good news is yours: on that day you will have gardens watered with flowing streams. You will abide therein forever. This is the great triumph.

THE WORST LOSERS ARE HYPOCRITES

[57:13] On that day, the hypocrite men and women will say to those who believed, "Please allow us to absorb some of your light." It will be said, "Go back and seek your own light." A barrier will be set up between them, whose gate separates mercy on the inner side from retribution on the outer side.
[57:14] They will call upon them, "Were we not with you?" They will answer, "Yes, but you cheated your Self, hesitated, doubted and became misled by wishful thinking until God's judgment came. You were diverted from God by illusions.
[57:15] "Therefore, today no ransom can be taken from you, neither from those who disbelieved. Your abode is the fire; it is your sustenance and a miserable abode."

THROUGH TIME DEEN WAS CHANGED TO RELIGION

[57:16] Is it not time for those who believed to open up their hearts for God's message and the truth that is revealed herein? They should not be like the followers of previous scriptures whose hearts became hardened with time and consequently many of them turned treasonable.[926]
[57:17] Know that God revives the land after it had died. We thus explain the revelations for you that you may understand.
[57:18] Surely, the sincere men and sincere women show their gratitude to God by their acts of righteousness. They will receive their reward multiplied manifold, they have deserved a generous recompense.
[57:19] Those who believed in God and His messengers are the steadfast and the martyrs. Reserved for them at their Sustainer are their rewards and an enlightened life. As for those who disbelieved and rejected Our revelations, they have incurred a hell of their own making.[927]

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potentialities. The reward of salvation is not a well-earned rest but a greater zeal for action and renewed outlook to an ambition, which is the life yet to come. To achieve salvation is to prove one's fitness for entering on a higher plane of existence in the next life. **Original Sin:** No person can be punished for the crimes of another. See verses and footnotes: 2:183; 53:38; 63:11.

[926] **Those who profess** to be believers are also committing 'shirk': treachery, by accepting authorities to rank with God, for example by accepting decrees or laws (made by imams, priests, political leaders etc.) that conflict with His guidance, the Quran. Here they are invited to accept this guidance sincerely. See verse and footnote 12:106.

[927] **Martyrdom:** Mu'mins, those convinced by this guidance, are prepared to fight for a just cause and to kill or get killed, and they receive their well deserved reward from God. See verses and footnotes 3:158; 4:74-78; 47:35. See also verses 49:14-15.

THIS LIFE A SHORT TEMPORARY PERIOD

[57:20] Know that this worldly life is no more than vanity and play and boasting among you and hoarding of money and pride of your children. It is like abundant rain that produces plants and pleases the disbelievers. But then the plants turn into useless hay and are blown away by the wind. In the life yet to come, there is either severe retribution or approval and protection from God. This worldly life is no more than a temporary illusion.
[57:21] Therefore, you shall race towards protection from your Sustainer and peace and security in a place that encompasses the heaven and the earth. It awaits those who believed in God and His messengers. Such is God's grace that He bestows according to His ordinance. God is Possessor of infinite grace.
[57:22] Anything that happens on earth or to you has already been recorded, even before the creation. This is easy for God to do.[928]
[57:23] Thus, you should not grieve over anything you miss nor be proud of anything He has bestowed upon you. God does not care for those who are boastful and proud.[929]
[57:24] They are miserly and persuade other people to be miserly. If one turns away, then God has all the wealth and is worthy of all praise.

FROM ORE TO IRON - SYMBOL OF KNOWLEDGE AND STRENGTH

[57:25] We sent Our messengers supported by clear signs and We sent down to them the guidance and the criterion that all the people may uphold justice. And We sent down iron, wherein there is strength and many benefits for mankind. All this in order for God to distinguish those who would support Him and His messengers, and even making right conclusions from evidence not readily apparent. God is the One who is Powerful and Almighty.

MANY DESCENDENTS OF MESSENGERS WICKED

[57:26] We sent Noah and Abraham, and We awarded their descendants duties as envoys with the scripture. Some of them accepted guidance while many were wicked.[930]
[57:27] Subsequent to them, We sent Our messengers. We sent Jesus the son of Mary and We gave him the Injeel and We placed in the hearts of his

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[928] **God does** not determine your choice but knows the choices you will make. All this is in accordance to His laws. His method of calculating our decisions and actions is beyond our imagination, but no doubt all probabilities are accounted for. See verse and footnote 6:59.
[929] **There are many things** in life we have no control over. It's not what we have but how we use it. In addition, our approach and attitude determines the outcome. This is why some people, against all odds, become great achievers. See verse and footnote 49:17.
[930] **Envoy** (Arabic: *nabi*). A nabi receives and delivers a revelation. See verse and footnote 7:157. Messengers, their descendents: many were wicked. See also verse 2:124.

followers kindness and mercy. But they invented hermitism that We had never prescribed for them. All We ordained for them to do was to uphold the commandments approved by God. But they did not uphold the guidance as they should have. Consequently, We gave those who believed among them their recompense, while many of them were wicked.[931]

[57:28] O you who believe, you shall do your duty to God and believe in His message. He will then grant you double the reward from His mercy, endow you with light to guide you and protect you. God is Protector and the Most Merciful.

[57:29] Thus, the followers of previous scripture should know that they have not monopolised God's mercy and grace and that all grace is in God's power. He bestows it according to His ordinance. God is Possessor of infinite grace.

[931] **Hermitism** and mysticism of any description have no place in the Deen-Islam, the dynamic System that encourages social interaction and develops the Self, not in isolation, but in the hurly-burly of life. The existence and development of the physical human being can take place even if man is cut off from society, but the development of the human personality, the Self, can only take place through social living. This is why God does not decree monasticism or asceticism of any kind. **Monasticism** or religious orders are often seen as peaceful and benign ways of life, but often these operate to legitimise grave injustices. This can be seen in the institutions of the church and the convents. The child sex abuses in the Catholic Church are now well-documented. In county Galway, Ireland, skeletons of 800 babies were found in a mass grave in a home for single mothers managed by nuns. In Pakistan, children with Microcephaly (born with a small head) are taken in by devotees of Daulay Shah, a revered Sufi saint, to beg in the streets. Those who do not have a small head are put in a 'head cage' to ensure the skull does not grow. Many myths are perpetuated about these children know as 'Chuhas' or 'Rats', including the myth that it is good luck to give them money. No doubt this works well for their masters. Likewise the Buddhist rulers in Tibet, at least up to 1951, instilled the belief of 'karma' and re-birth to maintain a system of serfdom, which is slavery by another name. Those who fell afoul of the ruling lamas met with cruel punishments with no appeal. Even children were not spared as can be seen from the handcuffs especially made for them. Women (married and unmarried) were frequently used as 'wisdom consorts' for the sexual pleasure of the monks. This monastic system propagated the landlord superiority and peasant unworthiness, the lowly poor deserving their mean existence because of their sins in a previous life. The religious doctrine of rebirth ensured a life in mental bondage and cruel servitude. See verse and footnote 52:29. **The Taurah and the Injeel:** The Quran often refers to the Injeel and the Taurah as previous scriptures, but this is not a reference to the new and the old Testaments of the present day Bible. See verse 62:5. **Messengers'** some descendents good some wicked. see verse and footnote 2:124 & verses 57:26-27.

Sura 58: The Debate (Al-Mujadalah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[58:1] God heard the woman who argued with the messenger about her husband and complained to God. God heard everything the two of you discussed. God is the Hearer and the Seer of all things.[932]

[58:2] There are those among you who estrange their wives by declaring them as their mothers and so forbidden for sex. You know full well that they are not your mothers. None are your mothers except the women who gave birth to you. Indeed, you are committing a blasphemy and a falsehood. God is Pardoner and Protector.[933]
[58:3] Those who estrange their wives in this manner, then reconcile thereafter, shall atone by freeing someone from their slavery before resuming sexual relations. This is to admonish and discipline you. God is aware of everything you do.[934]
[58:4] If you cannot find a captive or slave to free, you shall practice Self-restraint for two consecutive months before resuming sexual relations. If you cannot do this, then you shall feed sixty poor people. You shall believe in God and His guidance. These are God's laws. The rejecters of this guidance have incurred a painful retribution.[935]
[58:5] Surely, those who fight God and His messenger are eager for their own disgrace, like their previous counterparts who were committed to defeat. We have sent down clear proofs and the rejecters have incurred a shameful retribution.
[58:6] The day will come when God will resurrect them all, then inform them of everything they had done. God has recorded everything, while they will have forgotten. God witnesses all things.

GOD IS OMNIPRESENT

[58:7] Do you not realise that God knows everything in the heavens and everything on earth? No three people can meet secretly without Him being there, the fourth, nor five without Him being the sixth, nor less than that, nor more without Him being there with them wherever they may be. Then,

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[932] **Argue,** dispute (Arabic: *jadal*. Root: J'D'L Derivatives*: jadal, jadala, tu-jadilka. yujadilu, jadil, jidal*). This verse shows that it was possible to question and even argue with the messenger. See verse 2:197 and footnote.
[933] **Pardoner and Protector:** (Arabic: *afuwwun-ghafur*). See verses and footnotes 2:52, 2:58; 4:43; 4:99; 22:60; 33:40.
[934] **Slavery,** despite being abolished many years ago and made illegal in many countries still exists today in the form of bonded labour, slaves in the sex industry and sweat factories around the world, especially in developing countries. Devadasi is another form of sex slavery that has been with us since ancient times and surprisingly still exists today. See verse 2:177.
[935] **Abstain,** Self-restraint, Self-discipline: (Arabic: *sawma* Root: S'W'M). See verse 2:183.

on the Day of Resurrection, He will inform them of everything they had done. God is fully aware of all things.

DO NOT PLAN CORRUPTION

[58:8] Have you noted those who were warned from conspiring secretly, then persist in conspiring? They conspire to commit corruption, transgression and disobedience of this guidance. When they come to you, they greet you with a greeting other than that decreed by God. They say within themselves, "God will not punish us for what we say." Their only punishment is a hell of their own making, wherein they burn; what a miserable end.[936]

[58:9] O you who believe, if you have to confer secretly, you shall not confer to commit wrong, to transgress or to go against this guidance. You shall confer to work righteousness and safeguard it. You shall do your duty to God, before whom you will be summoned.

[58:10] Secret conspiracy is an evil idea of the egotistic Self which may hurt those who follow this guidance. However, it cannot harm them against God's ordinance. In God the believers shall trust.

GOOD MANNERS DURING ASSEMBLIES

[58:11] O you who believe, if you are told, "Please make room," you shall make room for each other to sit. God will then make room for you. If you are asked to get up and move, get up and move. God raises those among you who believe and those who acquire knowledge to higher ranks. God is fully aware of everything you do.[937]

[58:12] O you who believe, when you seek counsel from the messenger, you shall be sincere. This is better for you and more conducive. If you do not, then God is Protector and the Most Merciful.[938]

[58:13] If you fail to be sincere when reflecting on this guidance, then repented thereafter, God accepts your repentance. You shall observe your commitments and keep them pure. Do your duty to God and heed His message. God is fully aware of everything you do.[939]

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[936] **Peace:** greeting approved by God. (Arabic: *salamun*). It is vital to convey your intentions of 'Peace' - if that is what you intend. This is why the corruption of God's decreed salutations is condemned as it would be detrimental to relationships to hide or say what you do not really mean. To maintain righteousness and credibility is paramount. See verses 4:86; 6:54.

[937] **Behaviour in assemblies.** See verses 49:2; 62:9-11. **Consensus:** verses 3:159; 42:38; 62:9-11.

[938] **Sincere:** true, genuine, honest. (Arabic: *sadaqah*). Be sincere when seeking guidance. During the life of the messenger, people would have readily sought to confer with him about many matters. However, in his absence, individuals and communities and leaders can now seek guidance, sincerely, with an open mind from the Quran. The Quran is the living messenger, conveying the same message revealed through the messenger Muhammad. Also see verse 2:196.

[939] **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*). Verses 58:12-13. Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. See verse 2:43 and footnote.

CHOOSE YOUR FRIENDS CAREFULLY

[58:14] Have you noted those who befriended people who go against God and incite His wrath? They neither belong with you, nor you with them. They deliberately make lies about their relationships.
[58:15] God has prepared for them a severe retribution. Miserable indeed is what they do.
[58:16] They used their oaths as a means of repelling others from the path of God. Consequently, they have incurred a shameful retribution.
[58:17] Neither their money nor their children will help them against God. They have incurred a hellfire of their own making wherein they abide forever.
[58:18] The Day will come when God resurrects them all. They will swear to Him then, just as they swear to you now, thinking that they really are right. Indeed, they are the real liars.

THE PARTY OF THE DEVIL

[58:19] Their egotistic Self has possessed them and has caused them to disregard God's message. These are the party of Evil. Absolutely, the party of the egotistic Self are the losers.
[58:20] Surely, those who oppose God and His messenger will be with the lowliest.
[58:21] God has decreed: "I and My messengers will most assuredly win." God is the One who is Powerful and Almighty.

THE PARTY OF THE ONE GOD

[58:22] You will not find people who believe in God and accountability to Him befriending those who oppose God and His guidance, even if they were their parents or their children or their siblings or their family. For these, He decrees certainty into their hearts and supports them with directions from Him and admits them into gardens watered with flowing streams wherein they abide forever. God approves of them and they are pleased with Him. These are the party of God. Most assuredly, God's party are the ones who prosper.[940]

[940] **Party of the One God:** Who opposes God but the those who reject this guidance: the *kafir*? The *kafir* is a person who openly rejects, denies or conceals the truth, in this case the truth of this guidance. So what does the *kafir* really reject? This includes, among other things, the rejection of the truth, justice and the helping of the vulnerable. Furthermore, the rejection is in fact the refusal to accept values that advance society. And most importantly he rejects accountability to his Self and ultimately to God. An individual who openly refuses to accept the things that develop the human personality and rejects the Quran as guidance is a *kafir*. This is the 'Party of the Devil' that God says you must not befriend. See also verses and footnote 109:1-6.

Sura 59: The Exodus (Al-Hashr)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[59:1] Glorifying God is everything in the heavens and the earth and He is the Almighty, Most Wise.
[59:2] He is the One who evicted those who disbelieved among the people of the scripture from their homes in a mass exodus. You never thought that they would leave and they thought that their preparations would protect them from God. But then God came to them from whence they never expected and threw terror into their hearts. Thus, they abandoned their homes of their own desire, in addition to pressure from the believers. You who possess discerning insight should learn from this.
[59:3] If God had not forced them to leave, He would have punished them in this life. That would have been even worse than forcing them to leave. In the Hereafter He will commit them to the retribution of hell.
[59:4] This is because they opposed God and His messenger. For those who oppose God and His messenger, God is most strict in enforcing retribution.
[59:5] Whether you chop a tree or leave it standing on its trunk, this is in accordance with God's ordinance. He will surely humiliate the wicked.
[59:6] Whatever God restored for His messenger was not the result of your war efforts, whether you fought on horses or on foot. God is the One who empowers His messengers over whomever He wills. God is All-powerful.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE SPOILS OF WAR

[59:7] The spoils of war that God bestows upon His messenger from the defeated communities shall go to God and His messenger. You shall give these to your relatives, the orphans, the poor and the refugees. Thus, it will not remain monopolised by the strong among you. You may keep the spoils given to you by the messenger, but do not take what he forbids you from taking. You shall keep your duty to God. God is strict in enforcing retribution.
[59:8] You shall also give to the needy who have faced the challenges of life. They may have been evicted from their homes and deprived of their properties because they sought God's grace and pleasure and because they supported God and His messenger. They are the truthful.
[59:9] As for those who provided them with a home and a refuge and were believers before them, they care for those who also face challenges with them and find no hesitation in their hearts in helping them. In fact, they readily give them priority over themselves, even when they themselves need what they give away. Indeed, those who overcome their miserliness are the successful ones.
[59:10] Those who became believers after them say, "Our Sustainer, protect us and our brethren who preceded us to belief and keep our hearts from

harbouring any hatred towards those who first believed. Our Sustainer, You are Compassionate and Most Merciful."[941]

THE HYPOCRITES

[59:11] Have you noted those who are plagued with hypocrisy and how they said to their companions in disbelief among the people of the scripture, "If you are evicted we will go out with you and will never obey anyone who opposes you. If anyone fights you, we will fight on your side." God bears witness that they are liars.
[59:12] In fact, if their companions were evicted, they would not have gone out with them and if anyone fought them, they would not have supported them. Even if they supported them, they would have turned around and fled. Ultimately these people can never win.
[59:13] Indeed, you strike more terror in their hearts than their fear of God. This is because they are people who do not comprehend.
[59:14] They do not get together to fight you unless they are in well-shielded buildings or behind walls. They might appear formidable among themselves. You would think that they are united when in fact their hearts are divided. This is because they are people who do not understand.
[59:15] Their fate is the same as their counterparts who preceded them. They suffered the consequences of their decisions. They have incurred a painful retribution.
[59:16] They are like the egotistic Self influencing an individual: "Reject this guidance," then as soon as he disbelieves, he says, "You made your own decision. I fear God, Sustainer of the universe."
[59:17] The end for both of them is the inferno of hell, wherein they abide forever. This is the requital for the transgressors.

WHAT YOU PLANT TODAY - YOU REAP TOMORROW

[59:18] O you who believe, you shall uphold your duty to God and let every Self examine what it has sent ahead for tomorrow. You shall keep your duty to God. God is fully aware of everything you do.
[59:19] Do not be like those who forgot God, so He made them forget themselves. These are the wicked.
[59:20] Not equal are the dwellers of the hellfire and the dwellers of Paradise. The dwellers of Paradise are without doubt those who prospered.

[941] **Refugees:** Throughout the Quran there are decrees to help refugees. These verses [59:7-10] give more detail of how they should be helped. See also verses 2:196-199.

QURAN: A PROFOUND GUIDANCE

[59:21] If We revealed this Quran to a mountain, you would see it trembling, crumbling out of reverence for God. We cite these examples for all the people that they may reflect.[942]

GOD: HIS ATTRIBUTES

[59:22] He is the One God, there is no other god besides Him. Knower of all secrets and declarations. He is the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful.

[59:23] He is the One God, there are no other authorities to equal Him. The Sovereign, the Most Sacred, the Source of Peace, the Most Dependable, the Supreme, the Almighty, the Most Powerful, the Most Dignified. God be glorified, far above having partners or authorities to rank with Him.

[59:24] He is the One God: the Creator, the Initiator, the Designer. To Him belong the most absolute attributes. Glorifying Him is everything in the heavens and the earth. He is the Almighty, Most Wise.[943]

[942] **The Quran is profound revealed guidance,** detailed and complete. It has everything God wanted to convey and needs no supplementary teachings. This has been made clear. Many people tried to persuade the messenger to bring some other guidance or at least change what he was trying to convey. But the messenger had a mission and that was to deliver the message intact. If the messenger had given some additional 'hadith' other than the Quran, the best Hadith, then he would have been guilty of setting himself as an authority equal or rival to God. The consequences of such treachery would have been severe. [Verses 69:43-48]. Even though people wanted the messenger to invent something else, he did not. [Verses 17:73-74]. People wanted some other guidance. [Verse 10:15]. They even ask the messenger to make it up. [Verse 7:203]. **The messenger** never made up any supplementary guidance but other people did and we find this in the cannons of hadith literature compiled some 200 years after his death. Evil individual interfere in the process of conveying guidance: see footnote to verse 68:37 and verse 22:52. **God confirms** that the messengers never convey anything of their own whim, [Verse 21:27-29], and follow only the revealed guidance, and in the case of Muhammad, this guidance is the Quran and Quran alone. This is why he says: "I simply follow what is given to me..." [Verse 6:50; 7:203; 10:15; 46:9]. And he was commanded to remind with the Quran, and not any other book. **Remind with the Quran:** verse 50:45. The messenger was told to teach what is revealed. [Verse 43:43]. **Quran alone :** verse 17:46. See Quindex entry: Quran.

[943] **How does everything glorify God?** A piece of well designed equipment that functions properly and does exactly what it is supposed to do speaks volumes about the person who made it. It raises the esteem of its maker by the features which characterises the skills and competence of the hands that crafted it. It glorifies its maker. Similarly, for those who can see the intrinsic qualities in the universe, know that it truly glorifies God's power and authority. See verses 13:13; 24:41; 57:1. Intelligent design: see verse 68:52.

Sura 60: The Tested (Al-Mumtahanah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[60:1] O you who believe, you shall not befriend My enemies and your enemies, extending friendship to them while they reject the truth that has come to you. They persecuted the messenger and others just for believing in God, your Sustainer. If you strive and struggle in My cause, seeking My blessings, how can you secretly show friendship to them? I am fully aware of everything you conceal and everything you declare. Those among you who do this have indeed strayed off the right path.
[60:2] Whenever they encounter you, they treat you as enemies and hurt you with their hands and tongues. They want you to reject His message.[944]
[60:3] Your relatives and your children can never help you. On the Day of Resurrection, He will judge among you. God sees everything you do.

ABRAHAM: AN EXAMPLE FOR ALL MANKIND

[60:4] A good example has been set for you by Abraham and those with him.[945] They said to their people, "We abandon you and the idols that you set up to rank with God. We denounce you and you will see nothing from us except resistance and opposition until you believe in God alone." However, the exception was when Abraham said to his father, "I will implore for your protection, but I possess no power to save you from God." "Our Sustainer, we trust in You and turn to You. To You is the final return.[946]
[60:5] "Our Sustainer, let us not be oppressed by those who disbelieved and protect us. You are the Almighty, Most Wise."
[60:6] A good example has been set by them for those who do their duty to God and the Day of Accountability. As for those who turn away, God, worthy of all praise, is in no need of anything.
[60:7] God may change the animosity between you and them into love and care. God is All-powerful. God is Protector and the Most Merciful.

RELATIONS WITH UNBELIEVERS

[60:8] God does not forbid you from befriending those who do not fight you because of differing beliefs and do not evict you from your homes. You may befriend them and should be equitable towards them. God cares for those who are equitable.[947]

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[944] **The hypocrites,** the traitors and the disbelievers want you too to reject this message. For the corrupt and the criminal there are many immediate and short term gains to be made from creating fear and turmoil. **God's messenger** was encouraged to make-up alternative doctrines. See verse and footnote 48:25. Also see verses 17:73; 40:66 & 19:47.
[945] **Abraham,** the messenger, was an exemplary character in following God's guidance. Those who believe should do the same. Muhammad is also an example: see verse 33:21. See also 40:66.
[946] **Serve God alone** and follow Quran alone. See verses 6:50; 7:70; 11:45-47; 39:45; 40:12; 40:84.
[947] **Tolerance** is advocated at all times. See verse 41:34. **Freedom** of belief: see verses 2:256; 3:90; 4:137; 18:29; 25:63. **What does being equitable mean?** See footnote to verse 10:109.

[60:9] God prohibits you only from befriending those who fight you because of differing beliefs, evict you from your homes and band together with others to drive you out of your land and homes. You shall not befriend them. Those who befriend them are the transgressors.

ASYLUM SEEKING WOMEN

[60:10] O you who believe, when women from the opposition abandon your enemy and ask you for asylum, you shall test them. God is fully aware of their belief and once you establish that they are believers, you shall not return them to those who reject this guidance. They are not lawful to remain married to them nor shall the disbelievers be allowed to marry them. Give back the mahr that the disbelievers have paid. You commit no error by marrying them, so long as you pay them their due mahr. Do not stay married to disbelieving wives. You may ask them for the mahr you had paid and they may ask for what they paid. This is God's law and He judges among you. God is aware of all things and is the Most Wise.[948]

[60:11] If any of your wives join the enemies' camp, you shall compel the opponent to give equivalent compensation of a mahr to those whose wives abandoned them, even if you have to fight. You shall keep your duty to God, in whom you believe.

OBEYING MESSENGER IS CONDITIONAL

[60:12] O messenger, when the believing women who abandoned the enemy come to seek asylum with you and pledge to you that they will not set up any authority to rank with God, nor steal, nor commit fornication or adultery, nor kill their children, nor fabricate any falsehood, nor disobey your righteous orders, you shall accept their pledge and implore to God to protect them. God is Protector and the Most Merciful.[949]

[60:13] O you who believe, do not befriend people who oppose God's guidance and who are hopelessly stuck in disbelief. They are just as hopeless as the disbelievers who are already in the graves.

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[948] **Marriage** to women refugees, captives or ex-wives from the enemy side. See verses 2:221; 4:24; 24:4. See also verse 33:50.

[949] **Obedience** to the messenger is conditional. This verse shows that messengers are men with possible bias in matters other than the revelation and it is only his righteous orders that should be obeyed, i.e. God's laws and decrees in alignment with the Quran. Similar conditions apply to accepting orders from any administrator, only if their rules and decisions are in harmony with Quranic laws and values should they be accepted. See verses 7:188, 28:56, 33:37, 40:66; 41:6, 46:9, 60:12, 80:1-12. . **Mahr:** This is the groom's gift to the bride. See verses 2:236. **Fornication/adultery:** (Arabic: *zinna*). Consensual illicit sexual intercourse or any other consensual Illicit sexual relations. The Quran makes no distinction between adultery and fornication, both are termed as Illicit sex. See verse and footnote 24:4.

Sura 61: The Column (Al-Saff)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[61:1] Glorifying God is everything in the heavens and everything on earth. He is the Almighty, Most Wise.[950]
[61:2] O you who believe, why do you say what you do not do?
[61:3] Most abominable in the sight of God is that you say what you do not do.

[61:4] God cares for those who fight in His cause united as in one column, like a solid structure.
[61:5] Recall that Moses said to his people, "O my people, why do you hurt me, even though you know that I am God's messenger to you?" When they deviated, their hearts diverted, consistent with the ordinance of God. The wicked people are not guided. This transpires in accordance with God's ordinance.

AHMAD: THE ESTEEMED

[61:6] Recall that Jesus, son of Mary, said, "O Children of Israel, I am God's messenger to you, confirming the Taurah and bringing good news of a messenger to come after me; *ahmed,* whose name will be esteemed." Then, when he showed them clear signs, they said, "This is only sorcery."[951]
[61:7] Who is more evil than one who fabricates lies about God when being invited to submit to God's guidance? The wicked people are not guided. This transpires in accordance with God's ordinance.
[61:8] They wish to put out God's light with their words. But God insists upon perfecting His light in spite of those who reject His guidance.

THE DEEN ISLAM: AN ESTABLISHED ORDER

[61:9] God sent His messenger with this guidance of the established Order in truth, the System that prevails over all other systems, despite all the efforts of those who set up authorities to equal or rival Him.
[61:10] O you who believe, let Me inform you of something that will save you from painful and lasting consequences of all wrongdoing:
[61:11] Believe in God and His message of guidance and strive in the cause of God with your money and your lives. This is the best trade for you, if you only knew.

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[950] **How can people glorify God?** Glorification and honouring God is through good works underpinned by Quranic values. See verses and footnotes 21:20 and 25:70.
[951] **Esteemed,** highly respected, praised. (Arabic: *ahmadu.* Root H'M'D. Derivatives: *hamd, hamida, hamid, ahmad, muhammadun, muhammadin*). This verse reads: "... bringing good news of a messenger to come after me whose name will be esteemed." i.e. *ahmadu*; highly respected. This word is used in this verse as an adjective. See verse and footnote 47:2.

[61:12] In return He protects you from your errors, offences and indiscretions and admits you into a state of peace and security and grants you everything that you desire. This is the greatest achievement.
[61:13] Additionally, you get something you truly love: support from God and guaranteed victory. Give good news to the believers.
[61:14] O you who believe, be God's supporters, like the disciples of Jesus, the son of Mary. When he said to them, "Who are my supporters towards God," they said, "We are God's supporters." Thus, a group from the Children of Israel believed and another group disbelieved. We helped those who believed against their enemy, until they became victorious.[952]

[952] **Heaven and Hell:** What exactly is meant by saving one's Self or losing one's Self? These phrases become intelligible only when viewed in relation to the goal-seeking activity of the human Self. The deepest urge in man is for Self-development and Self-realisation. When he is making progress towards this goal, he feels happy and knows that he is on the way to qualify himself for promotion to a higher plane of existence. For the Self lives in and through activity and the activity natural to it is always in an upward direction. Inaction is the death of the Self and so is movement in a downward direction. When the Self of man is making steady progress towards the goal, it may be with occasional deviations and backsliding, but it slowly moves forward, until it finds itself in a state which is symbolised by paradise (Arabic: *jannah.* Root: J'N'N. A secret, hidden, veiled place), or the picturesque imagery with which it is represented, may lead many into thinking that it is a *place* which provides gratification for the, senses. It is not a *place* but a *state of mind,* a state charged with the sense of fulfilment and the feeling of high aspiration. It is akin to the feeling that a mountaineer experiences when, after wearily climbing its face and overcoming dangers, he finally reaches the peak. Other loftier peaks and challenges swim into his vision and invite him to fresh conquests. For him it is at once the end of a journey and the beginning of another. His joy at successful achievement is blended with the thrill and excitement of the discovery of fresh new adventure. Such is the state of mind of those who have fully realised themselves on the human plane and are ready to ascend to a higher one.

The state of mind directly opposite to this has been designated as *Jahannam.* It is the Arabic form of the Hebrew word *Gehenna.* Originally *Gehenna* meant the valley of Hannom, where human sacrifices to Baal and Moloch were offered. *Jahannam* symbolises that condition of existence in which the Self's purposeful activity is brought to a stand-still. Enfeebled and debilitated by continuous and persistent wrong doing, the Self loses its capacity for progress and for moving towards a higher state of being. Its urge for progress is crushed and the enervated Self surrenders itself to regret and remorse. It has voluntarily relinquished its right to participate in the pursuit of the good. If it ever feels the desire to rejoin the march of free Selves, the desire is too weak to pull it out of the slough of despair and inaction. In the words of the of the poet, Robert Frost, it has : *Nothing to look backward to with pride and nothing to look forward to with hope.* Those in *Jannah* will be spared the sight of this despondence. See verses. 21:101-3.

They will continue their forward march, steadily rising in the scale of existence and tasting the joys of Self-fulfilment. The process of their Self-development will be continuous and unlimited. when they have attained a high stage, the vision of a still higher one will spur them on to put forth fresh efforts. For them the reward of victory will not be well-earned rest but a greater zeal for action and a new vista to their ambition. Such is the picture of heaven and hell that the Quran presents for the edification of man.

Sura 62: The Assembly (Al-jumu'ah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[62:1] Glorifying God is everything in the heavens and everything on earth; the Sovereign, the Most Sacred, the Almighty and the Most Wise.
[62:2] He is the One who sent to the gentile community a messenger from among them to convey to them His revelations to purify them and teach them this guidance and the law. Before this they had been in total loss.[953]
[62:3] And also to many generations subsequent to them, He is the Almighty, Most Wise.
[62:4] Such is God's grace that He bestows upon whomever He wills. God is possessor of infinite grace.

[62:5] The example of those who were given the Taurah, then failed to uphold it, is like that of a donkey carrying great works of literature. Miserable indeed is the example of people who rejected God's revelations. God does not guide the wicked people.[954]

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[953] **Gentile:** (Arabic: *Ummy*). An individual or community unaware of true values. See verse 2:78.

[954] **With great power** comes great responsibility. Those who know and understand the Quran have acquired great knowledge and great strength, and when implemented, the sky is the limit. God points out the example of a donkey. To a donkey the books it carries are a burden, not the treasure they contain, secrets to discover such as how to succeed in this world and the life beyond. **The Taurah and the Injeel:** The Quran often refers to the Injeel and the Taurah as previous scriptures, and many people think that this is a reference to the Old and the New Testaments of the present day Bible. This is especially re-enforced by the Christian who misinterprets verses from the Quran that say, for example, " ...ask those who have read the previous scriptures..." as it does in verse 10:94, concluding that this means the Bible is correct. It must be emphasized that the Bible is not the scripture the Quran refers to, but the it is the Injeel (Good News) of Jesus, son of Mary and the Taurah (the Law) revealed to Moses. It becomes clear from reading the Bible and its history that neither of these writings (the Old and the New Testaments) are tributes to the respective messengers of God. One has just to take a cursory glance at Ezekiel 23:1-21 (among other chapters) to realise that it cannot be the word of God. Also Jeremiah 8.8 says that the *'...lying pens of the scribes...'* has made the law of the Lord into a lie. Further on in 1 Corinthians 6:24, Paul, the real founder of Christianity, its creed and doctrines, makes it plain that his writings are opinions and not commands of the Lord. There is no Gospel of Jesus in the Bible and the Gospels attributed to Mathew, Mark, Luke and John cannot be confirmed that they were indeed written by those who knew Jesus. The existence of two parallel Bibles, the Catholic Douay and the traditional King James Version show that there is no consensus as to which version is correct, as both have different number of chapters or 'books' as they are called. The question now arises is who has taken away from the 'words' of the Bible and who has added 'words' to the Bible? This act of 'adding' or 'taking' is condemned in Revelation 22:18-19. This is an anomaly impossible to reconcile. **The Quran confirms the message** brought by God's respected messengers Moses and Jesus, son of Mary, and states that this guidance, the Quran, is no difference from the guidance they brought. See verse 42:13 and verses and footnotes 2:89; 2:97; 2:101; 2:121; 2:109; 2:113; 2:121; 2:144; 2:146; 3:3-4; 3:20; 3:23; 3:64; 3:65; 3:71. Just as the Injeel confirmed the Taurah, the Quran now too confirms and

[62:6] Say: "O you who claim to be close to God, if you claim that you are God's chosen, to the exclusion of all other people, then you should long for death, if you are truthful"
[62:7] They will never long for it, because of what they have committed. God is fully aware of the wicked.
[62:8] Say: "The death that you are trying to evade will catch up with you sooner or later. Then you will be returned to the Knower of all secrets and declarations, then He will inform you of everything you had done."

THE DAY OF ASSEMBLY

[62:9] O you who believe, when you are called to make commitments on a Day of Assembly, you shall hasten to do your duty to God and conclude or delay personal and business matters. This is better for you, if you only knew.
[62:10] Once your commitments are completed, you may return to your business and personal affairs to seek God's bounties, and uphold your duty to God, that you may succeed.[955]
[62:11] When some of them come across a business deal or some entertainment, they rush to it and leave you standing. Say: "What God possesses is far better than the amusement or the commerce and profit that you seek. God is the best provider."

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encompasses all the guidance given to previous messengers. See verses and footnotes 3:3-4; 5:3; 5:46; 28:49 & 4:171.

[955] **Day of Assembly** (Arabic: yaum-il-jumah). is when lawful governing bodies, administrations or communities gather to assess, maintain or decide their affairs and allocate duties. This may include leaders of communities or nations, the people who carry out administrative tasks of societies and also when members of the general public are required to take part, in a voting or referendum event for example. This assembly may also encompass important events that require your presence, for example a meeting to discuss community problems in a local committee, or if you are an elected member of an assembly, to debate matters of government. Every person must perform his or her duty and attend such gatherings when required to do so. See verses 3:159; 42:38; 49:2; 58:11. **Following opinions,** holding strong opinions without any foundation 49:2; 38:26.

Sura 63: The Hypocrites (Al-Munafiquun)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[63:1] When the hypocrites come to you they say, "We bear witness that you are the messenger of God." God knows that you are His messenger and God bears witness that the hypocrites are liars.[956]
[63:2] Under the guise of apparent belief, they repel others from the path of God. Miserable indeed is what they do.
[63:3] This is because they believed, then disbelieved. Hence, their minds are blocked and they do not understand.

[63:4] When you see them, you may be impressed by their looks. And when they speak, you may listen to their eloquence. They are like standing logs. They think that every call is intended against them. These are the real enemies, beware of them. God condemns them because they have deviated.
[63:5] When they are told, "Come let the messenger of God beseech for your protection," they mockingly turn their heads and you see them act arrogantly and repel others.

[63:6] It is the same for them, whether you implore for their protection or do not implore for their protection, God will not protect them. The wicked people are not guided, in accordance with God's ordinance.
[63:7] They are the ones who say, "Do not give any money to those who follow the message of God, perhaps they will then abandon it." However, God possesses the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not comprehend.

[63:8] They say, "If we go back to the city, the powerful therein will evict the weak and we will be victimised." They should know that all dignity

[956] **Muslims** undeniably accept that Muhammad was God's last messenger to whom this guidance was revealed. However, no one but God, can bear witness (Arabic: *shahid*) that Muhammad was the messenger of God, simply because no person witnessed this event. As clearly stated in verses 4:79 & 13:43, God suffices as witness - and anyone who testifies to confirm an event that they did not witness commits perjury. See also verses 3:18; 7:75. **Hypocrites** (Arabic: *munafiq*) show their true colours when they think they can bear witness - just to evince their allegiance and further their self interest - that Muhammad is God's messenger. No one can bear such witness, except God, and this is why God calls them liars. See verses 3:167; 4:79; 28:44; 47:30. & 2:8; 22:30. **Contrary** to general belief King Offa of Mercia, middle England (775 C.E.) did not have the testimony (Arabic: *shahada*) as in verse 63:1 inscribed on his coins. Offa did not 'witness or testify' Muhammad's messengership but correctly stated on his coins that 'Muhammad is the messenger'. More importantly, the obverse of the coins read: *"La ilaha ilallah"*, meaning that 'there is no authority to rank with the One God.' Whether King Offa was a muslim or not is debatable, but the coins would certainly have been useful to trade in southern Europe where trade with muslims was buoyant. The text on the coins is in Arabic and the coins are kept in the British Museum.

belongs to God and His messenger and the believers. However, the hypocrites do not know.

FOLLOW GOD'S GUIDANCE AT ALL TIMES

[63:9] O you who believe, do not be distracted by your money or your children from doing your duty to God. Those who do this are the losers.
[63:10] You shall spend for the good of social welfare from Our provisions to you before death comes, then you will not need to say, "My Sustainer, if only You could delay this for a short while, I will then be at the forefront of spending in cause of needy people and join the righteous."
[63:11] God never delays the appointed time of death for any individual. God is fully aware of everything you do.[957]

[957] **Salvation:** The religious doctrines of salvation have a great deal in common. The emphasis is on liberation from sin and rescue from evil. In each, the objective is a return to a previous state of innocence and bliss. As sin is supposed to be inseparable from life and the phenomenal world is believed to be the abode of evil, it follows that liberation can be achieved only by renouncing the world. It must be admitted that during certain periods of human history, such doctrine attracted large numbers of men and cast its spell even on men of learning and intelligence. It is a fact that during these periods, men suffered acute frustration and were disillusioned with life. Having nothing to hope for in this world, they centred their hopes on the other world where they might get all that they missed in this world. This doctrine is the product of the disillusionment and defeatism. It is clearly repugnant to men who are sane and normal. It is in direct opposition to reason, to experience and to the progress of mankind. Hope cannot be killed - it springs with zeal in the human heart. When man recovers his natural buoyancy, he recoils with horror from such a dismal doctrine. He tends to look on the world of matter as a field for varied fruitful activities. He refuses to believe that his soul will be blighted by the slightest contact with the world. The doctrine also implies that the world has no purpose or design. If ever it becomes the dominant creed, humanity will be doomed to stagnation and decay. All the healthy instincts in man rebel against such a barren concept. To believe in a 'god' who has created a world which should be shunned is derogatory both to God and man.

The Quranic concept of salvation is of a different kind, and as is clear from reading the Quran, it is attuned to the constructive and progressive forces in man. In the first place, the world of matter is regarded as embodying a purpose which is consonant with the purpose inherent in the human Self: "We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything between them just for mere amusement." See verses 21:16.

Moreover, in the Quran, the emphasis is on the positive content of salvation. It is not conceived as a negation of pain and liberation from evil. It consists in the sense of fulfilment, the feeling of realisation and the thrill of expansion. Man is endowed with a number of potentialities. By developing these he reaches his full stature and qualifies for still higher stages awaiting him. Man must discover in what direction his Self can develop and then he must create the conditions, physical as well as social, which favour the development. His main task in this life is to develop his Self by conquering the forces of nature and employing them for the development of mankind. When the malaika are ordered to submit to Adam, in reality the ability to harness the forces of nature are given to mankind, except of course the independent 'free will', the egotistic aspect of the Self, which is represented here by Iblees, also mentioned as shaitan, the negative feature of our personality. See verses: 2:31; 2:43. 2:183; 67:2; 51:56;73:20; 90:4; 91:9-10.

Sura 64: The Mutual Blaming (Al-Taghabun)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[64:1] Glorifying God is everything in the heavens and everything on earth. To Him belongs all sovereignty and to Him belongs all honour and He is the One who is All-powerful.[958]
[64:2] He is the One who created you, then among you there are the rejecters of this guidance and the acceptors of this guidance. God is the One who sees everything you do.
[64:3] He created the heavens and the earth for a specific purpose, designed you and perfected your design, then to Him is the final return.
[64:4] He knows everything in the heavens and the earth and He knows everything you conceal and everything you declare. God is fully aware of your innermost thoughts.
[64:5] Have you noted those who rejected the guidance in the past, then suffered the consequences of their decision? They incurred a painful retribution.
[64:6] This is because the messengers went to them with clear signs, but they said, "Shall we follow humans like us?" They rejected the guidance and turned away. God does not need them. God is in no need of anyone and is worthy of all praise.
[64:7] Those who disbelieve claim that they will not be resurrected. Yes indeed, by my Sustainer, you will be resurrected and you will be held accountable for everything you have done. This is easy for God to do.
[64:8] Therefore, you shall believe in God and His message of guidance and the light that We have revealed herein. God is fully aware of everything you do.
[64:9] The time will come when He summons you on the Day of Accountability. That is the Day of Mutual Blaming. Anyone who believes in God and leads a righteous life, He will remit his faults and will admit him into gardens watered with flowing streams. They abide therein forever. This is the greatest triumph.[959]
[64:10] As for those who disbelieve and reject Our revealed guidance, they are the dwellers of a hell of their own making. They abide therein forever. What a miserable end.

THE LAW OF REQUITAL

[64:11] Nothing happens to you except in accordance with God's ordinance. Anyone who believes in God, He will guide his heart and mind. God is fully aware of all things.

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[958] **How do you glorify God?** God is glorified by the person who follows His guidance and becomes an example for others by doing his or her duty to God. See footnote to verse 57:1.
[959] **Disbelievers** and rejecters of this guidance when faced with the retribution will blame each other for the situation they have landed themselves in. See verses and footnotes 40:47-52.

[64:12] You shall obey God and you shall obey the messenger. If you turn away, then the sole mission of Our messenger is the conveyance of this complete clear message.
[64:13] The One God: there is no other authority to equal Him. In God the believers shall trust.[960]
[64:14] O you who believe, your spouses and your children can be your enemies, so beware and remain cautious of them. If you pardon and overlook their faults and are caring, then God is Protector and the One Most Merciful.
[64:15] Your money and children are a trial and God possesses a great recompense for those who do good.
[64:16] Therefore, you shall do your duty to God as much as you can and listen and obey and spend for the good of social welfare, and your Self will receive its reward. Those who are protected from their own miserliness are the successful ones.[961]
[64:17] If you show gratitude to God by your righteousness, He will multiply the reward for you many fold and protect you. God shows his approval with compassion.
[64:18] The knower of all secrets and declarations, the Almighty and the Most Wise.[962]

[960] **Obey God, obey the messenger:** see footnote to verse 80:42.
[961] **Hypocrite:** (Arabic: *munafiq.* Root N'F'Q). has been translated as hypocrite simply because of the lack of a more appropriate word. Inward miserliness is perhaps a good way of describing a hypocrite. The *munafiq* hold back in everything except that which is in their self-interest. See verse and footnote 2:8. Social welfare; see verse 21:112.
[962] **Mutual blaming. Leaders:** The majority of people are happily following their leaders who may be politicians or priests, but on the Day of Accountability they will blame each other for their disgrace and the miserable situation they will find themselves in without the opportunity to repair the lasting damage they have done to their Self. The very things they mocked will prove to be right and they find that they have landed in a hell of their own making for rejecting the truth that came to them. See verses 6:137; 9:31; 9:34; 10:28-29; 14:21-23; 17:16; 22:12-14; 28:41; 33:64-68; 34:41-34; 37; 27-39; 40:46-47; 74:24-28; **Parents:** If following corrupt leaders is a mistake then following blindly the religion of parents is an even greater tragedy. Just because doctrines and rituals have been practiced for generations, even though they may appear to be good, does not mean they are the true guidance to development of the Self. Unless you follow the true and balanced path, you pave your way to a hell of your own making. See verses 2:170-171; 5:104; 6:147-148; 7:28; 7:65-72; 7:172-174; 9:23-24; 10:20; 11:62; 11:87; 11:109; 12:40; 14:10-18; 16:35; 17:28; 18:5; 21:53-62; 26:74-91; 31:21; 34:43; 37:69-74; 37:167-182; 43:22-25.

Sura 65: The Divorce (Al-Talaaq)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[65:1] O messenger, when you divorce your women, you shall ensure that the divorce interim is fulfilled. You shall measure such an interim precisely. You shall keep your duty to God, your Sustainer. Do not evict divorcees from their homes or make life miserable for them, or force them to leave on their own, unless they commit a clear act of immorality. These are God's laws. Anyone who transgresses against God's law commits an injustice against his Self. You may not know, but God's ordinance requires something good to come out of this.[963]

[65:2] Once the interim is fulfilled, you may reconcile with them equitably or go through with the separation equitably. You shall have two reliable persons to witness the divorce before God. This is to enlighten those who believe in God and the Last Day. Anyone who fulfils their obligation to God, He will create an honourable exit for him,

[65:3] And will provide for him from where he never expected. Anyone who trusts in God, He suffices for him. God's commands are always fulfilled. God has decreed a procedure for everything.

[65:4] As for the women who have reached menopause, if you have any doubts, their interim shall be three months. As for those who do not menstruate and discover that they are pregnant, their interim ends upon giving birth. Anyone who fulfils his duty to God, He makes everything easy for him.

[65:5] This is God's command that He sends down to you. Anyone who keeps his duty to God, God then remits his faults and rewards him generously.

[65:6] You shall allow divorced wives to live in the same home in which they lived with you and do not make life so miserable for them that they are compelled to leave on their own. If they are pregnant, you shall spend on them until they give birth. If they nurse their infant, you shall pay them for this service. You shall maintain amicable relations among you. If you disagree, you may hire another woman to nurse the child.

[65:7] The rich husband shall provide support in accordance with his means and the poor shall provide according to the means that God

[963] **The divorcee's** interim, before becoming eligible for remarriage, is a waiting period of three menstruations. This ensures that the divorcee is not pregnant at time of divorce. **The concept of Muta,** mistakenly known as temporary marriage (the Sunni equivalent is *misyar)*, is negated by the Quranic procedure for divorce, as such an arrangement does not allow for a divorce procedure to be carried out and completed. Muta is in fact a euphemism for prostitution. See verses and footnotes 2:228; 24:2-20; 24:23-26.

bestowed upon him. God does not impose a burden on any person more than he has the ability to bear. God will provide ease after difficulty.
[65:8] Many a community rebelled against the commands of their Sustainer and against His messengers. Consequently, We held them strictly accountable and punished them a terrible penalty.
[65:9] They suffered the consequences of their decisions, a profound loss.
[65:10] God has prepared for them severe retribution. Therefore, you shall do your duty to God, O you who possess intelligence and believed. God has sent down this message of guidance for you,
[65:11] a message, a recitation of God's revealed guidance, made clear to lead those who believe and to create harmony by moving you out of the dark depths of displacement and into the light of righteousness. Anyone who believes in God and leads a righteous life, He will admit him into gardens of peace and security. They abide therein forever. God will generously reward him.[964]

THE UNIVERSES: A MATTER OF DESIGN

[65:12] God created seven universes and the same of the earth. His directives intrinsically control them. This is to let you know that God is All-powerful and that God is fully aware of all things.[965]

[964] **Displacement/ turmoil:** (Arabic: *zulm.* Root Z'L'M). *Zulm* is the antonym of *islam*. Islam means to harmonise and achieve peace and order by balance in tune with the laws of God, peace by acceptance or submission to His ordinance and laws. *Zulm* is the displacement of those values that create discord and conflict sinking into the depths of moral darkness. One element that accurately illustrates *islam* and *zulm* (peace and turmoil) is water made from two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom. When both elements come together in proper proportion they combine to create water, the most abundant and life sustaining liquid on earth. However, when separated the hydrogen atom is highly flammable, and while oxygen promotes combustion and can be very dangerous near hydrogen. Similarly a society, which was once diverse with individuals who had their own conflicting goals, when based on Absolute Laws and Permanent Values comes together, like water, as one stable life enhancing unit of peace and security, but when its values are displaced, the same society becomes a fire-bed of discord, fear and turmoil - truly a hell of their own making. See verses 7:20; 27:11; 35:20. Also see 2:35; 7:14; 17:60; 94:5 & 68:52. **Does evil exist?** When we understand that evil is the displacement of order (the Quran terms this as *zulm*) we can then put it into context. See verse and footnote 7:201.

[965] **Intelligent design:** see verse and footnote 41:53.

Sura 66: The Prohibition (Al-Tahreem)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[66:1] O messenger, why do you prohibit what God has made lawful for you, just to please your wives? God is Protector, most Merciful.[966]
[66:2] God has decreed for you the laws dealing with your oaths. God is your Sustainer and He is the one aware of all things and is the most wise.
[66:3] The messenger trusted one of his wives about a certain event, then she divulged it, and later the messenger became aware of the indiscretion. He then informed his wife revealing something of what he came to know, and disregarded a part of it. She asked him, "Who informed you of this?" He said, "My intuition was bestowed on me by the One who sees all things and knows all things.[967]
[66:4] If the two of you repent to God, then you have heeded this guidance. But if your wives group together against you, then God is his ally and so is Gabriel and the righteous believers. Also, all the malaika are his helpers.
[66:5] If he divorces you, his Sustainer will substitute other wives in your place who are better than you: muslims, mu'mins, obedient, repentant, serving God, pious; either divorced, widowed or virgins.[968]

PROTECT YOUR FAMILIES

[66:6] O you who believe, protect yourselves and your families from an end in an inferno fuelled by people who transgressed; a state of being between rock and a hard place. Guarding it are stern and powerful malaika never disobedient to God, following His laws and commands.
[66:7] O you who rejected this guidance, do not apologise today. You are being punished only for what you did.

THE BELIEVERS RETURN TO GOOD CONDUCT

[66:8] O you who believe, you shall repent to God a firm repentance. Your Sustainer will then remit your faults and admit you into gardens watered with flowing streams. On that day, God will not disappoint the messenger and those who believed with him. Their light will radiate in front of them as is their rightful privilege. They will say, "Our Sustainer, perfect our light for us and protect us. You are All-powerful."[969]

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[966] **This verse** teaches us that the messenger was indeed a fallible human being like any other man. There were other occasions when the messenger erred and was corrected by God. Muhammad forbade what was lawful and he is reprimanded. The message is: do not forbid, what God has not. See verses 18:6; 18:110; 33:37; 38:24; 40:66; 80:1.
[967] **Event:** (Arabic: *hadith*). See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.
[968] **The descriptions** 'muslim' and 'mu'min' mean one who has submitted and one who has accepted God through conviction, respectively. See verse 49:14.
[969] **Repentance** is not a passive act of regret. When you realise that you have been following the wrong path, you should retrace your steps and reappraise the situation. Repentance means not to

[66:9] O messenger, strive against those who reject this guidance and the hypocrites and be stern with them. Their abode is hell, a miserable end of their own making.[970]

THE MYTH OF INTERCESSION SHATTERED

[66:10] God cites examples of those who disbelieved, the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were married to two of Our righteous servants, but they betrayed them and consequently, the messengers could not help them at all against God. The two of them were told, "Enter the hellfire with those who deserve it."

EXAMPLES OF THE BELIEVERS: FIRAWN'S WIFE

[66:11] And God cites as an example of those who believed, the wife of Firawn. She said, "My Sustainer, embrace me in the System of peace and security and save me from Firawn and his works; save me from the transgressing people."

[66:12] Also Mary, the daughter of Imran. She maintained her virtue and We directed her with Our Ruh. She believed in the words of her Sustainer and His guidance; she was obedient in serving Him.[971]

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succumb to unrestrained grief, but to resolutely hasten back to the starting point and choose the correct path. The individual who has realised his mistake should be eager to rectify it and to repair the damage done. Repentance, therefore, is positive effort at restoration of the lost position. See verse and footnote 9:112; 68:32.

[970] **Hypocrite:** (Arabic: *munafiq).* See verse and footnote 2:8.

[971] **Ruh** is the directive energy *from* God, but not *of* God. See verse 4:171. Mary chosen above all women for her righteousness and purity of character. See verse and footnote 19:21.

Sura 67: The Sovereignty (Al-Mulk)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[67:1] Most exalted is the One who has absolute sovereignty and He has power over all things.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

[67:2] He is God, The One who created death and life, so that you may fulfil your potential and have the opportunity to become distinguished and an eminent creation. He is the Almighty, the Protector.[972]
[67:3] He created seven universes in layers. You do not see any imperfection in the creation by the Most Gracious. Keep looking: do you see any flaw?
[67:4] Look again, and again. Your eyes will come back stumped and conquered.
[67:5] We adorned the lowest universe with stars and guarded its boundaries with projectiles against those who are up to no good. We prepared for them a retribution in hell.

THOSE WHO DEFY THEIR INTELLIGENCE SUFFER

[67:6] For those who disbelieved in their Sustainer, the retribution of hell is imminent. What a miserable end.
[67:7] When they get drawn therein, they hear its furore.
[67:8] It almost explodes as if in a rage. Whenever a group succumbs therein, its guards will ask them, "Did you not receive a warner?"
[67:9] They will answer, "Yes indeed; a warner did come to us, but we disbelieved and said, `God did not reveal anything. You are totally astray.' "
[67:10] They also say, "Had we listened and used our intelligence, we would not be among the companions of the hellfire."
[67:11] Thus, they confess their wrongs. Misery to the dwellers of hell.[973]

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[972] **This is the purpose of life:** to develop and become a better creation. There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly and in a similar way the human being evolves into a new eminent creation. **The evolution** process has taken billions of years and the human being has emerged as the master of the world. However, it doesn't stop here, there is a life yet to come and 'death' is just a transition. This world is a matrix to develop the Self to make it fit for the next stage in evolution. This Quran is the guidance that will help you do this. See verses and footnotes 6:132; 23:14; 67:2; 84:19; 90:3-8 and also footnote to verse 10:109. **Does the human being** and the universe have a purpose? The atheist says no. He says that while the individual can be purposeful, the universe itself does not have a purpose, or indeed a '*purposer*'. From a Quranic perspective, this is arrogance. Do the individuals at the micro level have a purpose, but something as grand and complex as the cosmos does not? See verses 3:191; 21:16; & footnotes to 7:201; 16:106; 87:3.

[973] **After judgement** has taken place, those who wronged their Self will feel remorse. See verse 14:22.

[67:12] As for those who fulfil their duty to their Sustainer, when alone in their privacy, they have attained protection and a great recompense.
[67:13] Whether you keep your utterances secret or declare them, He is fully aware of your innermost thoughts.
[67:14] Should He not know what He created? He is the Sublime and Most aware of all things.
[67:15] He is the One who put the Earth at your service. Travel across it and eat from His provisions. To Him is the final reckoning.
[67:16] Have you guaranteed that the One in heavens will not strike the earth and cause it to tumble?
[67:17] Have you guaranteed that the One in heavens will not send upon you a violent storm? Will you then appreciate the value of My warning?
[67:18] Others before them have disbelieved, how terrible was My retribution?

[67:19] Have they not seen the birds above them lined up in a formation as they spread their wings in flight? The Most Gracious is the One who holds them in the air. He is the One who sees all things.
[67:20] Where are those supporters who can help you against the Most Gracious? Indeed, the rejecters of this guidance are deluded.
[67:21] Who is there to provide for you, if He withholds His provisions? Indeed, they have plunged deep into transgression and aversion.
[67:22] Is the one who walks with his face averted better guided or the one who walks well balanced on a straight path?
[67:23] Say: "He is the One who initiated you and granted you the hearing, the eyesight and the insight. Rarely are you appreciative."
[67:24] Say: "He is the One who placed you on earth, and before Him you will be summoned."
[67:25] They challenge: "When will that promise come to pass, if you are truthful?"
[67:26] Say: "Such knowledge is with God. I am no more than a manifest warner."
[67:27] When they see it happening, the faces of those who disbelieved will turn miserable and it will be proclaimed: "This is what you used to mock."
[67:28] Say: "Whether God decides to annihilate me and those with me or bless us with His mercy, who is there to protect the disbelievers from a painful punishment?"
[67:29] Say: "He is the Most Gracious. We believe in Him and we trust in Him. You will surely find out who is really far astray."
[67:30] Say: "What if your water sinks away, who will provide you with pure water?"

Sura 68: The Pen (Al-Qalam)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[68:1] The letter N, the pen and what they write with it.
[68:2] The messenger has attained a great blessing from your Sustainer and he is not an eccentric nor a possessed individual.
[68:3] He has attained a recompense that is well deserved.
[68:4] He is blessed with an exemplary character.
[68:5] He will witness the truth and they will witness the truth.
[68:6] And see who are really the condemned.
[68:7] Your Sustainer is fully aware of those who moved away from His path and He is fully aware of those who are guided.
[68:8] Do not obey the rejecters of this guidance.
[68:9] They wish that you compromise, so they too can compromise.

THOSE WHO ARE CORRUPT SUFFER

[68:10] Do not accept the words of every lowly oath taker.
[68:11] The slanderers and the backbiters are unreliable.
[68:12] They hamper and hinder those who do good, and are transgressors and wrongdoers.
[68:13] The one who is unappreciative and the one consumed with greed.
[68:14] Even though they possessed enough money and were blessed with children.
[68:15] When Our revealed guidance is recited to them, they say, "These are tales from the past."
[68:16] We will mark their faces.
[68:17] We have tested them like We tested the owners of the orchards who swore that they will harvest their crop in the morning.
[68:18] They were so absolutely sure.
[68:19] A storm subject to the ordinance of your Sustainer passed by it while they were asleep.
[68:20] By morning, it was barren.
[68:21] They called on each other in the morning.
[68:22] "Let us harvest our crops."
[68:23] On their way they confided to each other.
[68:24] That from then on none of them would be poor.
[68:25] They were so absolutely sure of their harvest.
[68:26] But when they saw it they said, "We were so wrong!
[68:27] "Now, we have nothing!"
[68:28] The righteous among them said, "If only you had followed God's guidance."
[68:29] They said, "Glory be to our Sustainer. We transgressed."
[68:30] They started to blame each other.

[68:31] They said, "Misery to us. We have wronged our Self.
[68:32] "May our Sustainer grant us a better harvest. We now turn to our Sustainer in repentance."[974]
[68:33] Such was their punishment. But the retribution of the Hereafter is far greater, if they only knew.

RIGHTEOUS FOLLOW THIS GUIDANCE

[68:34] The righteous have deserved at their Sustainer gardens of peace and tranquillity.
[68:35] Shall We treat those who accept this guidance like the corrupt and the criminals who reject it?
[68:36] What is wrong with your logic?
[68:37] Do you have another book of guidance that you uphold?[975]
[68:38] In it, do you find anything you want?
[68:39] Or, have you received complete assurances from Us that grant you whatever you wish on the Day of Resurrection?
[68:40] Ask them, "Who guarantees this for you?"
[68:41] Do they have authorities that rank with God? Let them help, if they are truthful.
[68:42] The day will come when they will be exposed and they will be required to concede to God, but they will be unable to.
[68:43] With their eyes subdued, humiliation will cover them. They were invited to follow God's guidance when they were whole and able.

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[974] **Repentance:** (Arabic: *tauba*). When a person strays off the balanced path and realises it, retraces his steps to the point where he took the wrong turn and reappraises the situation and moves forward in the right direction, this is repentance. In addition 'tauba' has in it an ingredient of Divine help, following His guidance supports all efforts to act with certainty, and the sense of previous loss is removed. Tauba is not a passive act of regret but it is a positive effort at restoration of the lost position. Tauba is the regeneration of energy and confidence that helps repair the damage done. See verse and footnote 9:112; 66:; 78:40..

[975] **The Quran** is a book of guidance from God and His message to mankind. It has no equal. Therefore to produce other books (that give you anything that you want - as mentioned in the verse above) collections such as *Al-Sihah al-Sittah*: Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Daud, Nasa'ai and Ibn Maja, the risalah of Imam Malik, Ibn Hanbal, Al-Bayhaqi etc. and Al-Kutb Al-Arb'ah: Kulainy, Shaikh Saduq, Shaikh Tusi etc. and use their conflicting doctrines to supplement the Quran is *shirk,* as it is setting up another authority as lawmakers to rank with God. This of course includes any books, laws and rulings that conflict with the Quran: *Do you seek other than God as an authority of law when He has revealed to you this book (the Quran) fully detailed*? See verse 6:114 and verse 5:6. God culminated His Deen in the Quran with His final messenger [Verse 5:3], so what place have books adding to or abrogating God's laws? See verses and footnotes 4:42; 2:105; 5:48; 6:114; 7:157; 9:1-10; 10:15; 40:74; 41:42-43; 43:22 and verses 16:25; 69:40; 78:40. See also 17:73; 43:22; 48:25; 78:40. **Idolatry** is not only about worshipping statues but is also about serving something or someone that is other than God as a more important objective in life. This could the excessive love for your nation (nationalism), obsessive admiration for a famous person, an extreme passion for a political cause or even devotion to a religion and its doctrines. See verses 34:13 & 37:125-128.

[68:44] Therefore, let Me deal with those who reject this Hadith, My revealed message: We will give them latitude and they will move astray without perceiving.[976]
[68:45] I will give them enough latitude; My planning is formidable.
[68:46] Are you asking them for money, so they are burdened by what they have to pay?
[68:47] Do they know the future? Do they have it recorded?

A MESSENGER DISOBEYED GOD

[68:48] You shall steadfastly persevere in carrying out the commands of your Sustainer. Do not be like Jonah who called from inside of a whale.[977]
[68:49] If it were not for his Sustainer's grace, he would have been ejected into the desert as a wrongdoer.
[68:50] But his Sustainer blessed him and made him righteous.
[68:51] Those who disbelieved show their ridicule in their eyes when they hear the message and say, "He is disturbed."
[68:52] In truth this is a message to the world.[978]

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[976] **Message:** (Arabic: *hadith*). The Quran is the best *hadith* that leads to a balanced and straight path. See verse 39:23. **Hadith:** See verses and footnotes 4:42; 78:40.

[977] **Jonah** disobeyed God and rebelled against the command of God to fulfil his duty. God's plans are formidable and Jonah conceded, repented and carried out the work he was sent to do. Messengers of God are human beings and as such have human failings. See verses 2:160; 27:11; 20:115; 40:66.

[978] **Intelligent design:** There are many things that underpin intelligent design and beauty in nature is one of them. Beauty means wholesome perfection and we see this throughout the natural world, from the structure of the atom, plant and animal life, the planets and the universe. If there is no intelligent origin to this universe, then why do we express such a thing as annoyance at anything? If things are only a result of chemical and biochemical reactions, then everything transpires as an inevitable result; things happen because that is the way they were meant to happen. However, if there is a right and a wrong, then there must be an explanation other than blind matter and motion. It is in reality the moral law that points to a transcendent cause for morality. This is what leads the way to an intelligent designer and an explanation for morality. If this is not true then ultimately everything is the product of irrational causes. It means that you can derive something intelligent from that which is not intelligent. Believing in an intelligent designer - God - helps discovery, science and ultimately humanity, because only if we believe in intelligent designer can we look for and appreciate intelligent design. If there is no lawmaker behind the natural world then why should we expect nature to act in a reasonable and ordered way with the precise reliability it does? Some people say that nature itself can create complex laws without the need for an intelligent designer, but laws need direction - where does the direction come from? Indeed, laws of nature explain how things happen, but they cannot explain the need for direction just as they cannot explain the need for morality or the judgement of morality. **Does evil prove the existence of good?** see verses and footnotes 7:201. See also 10:6; 13:4; 41:53; 54:49; 57:49; 65:12.

Sura 69: The Reality (Al-Haqqah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[69:1] The reality.
[69:2] What is the reality?
[69:3] It is truly an awesome event,
[69:4] Thamoud and Aad disbelieved in the awesome conclusion,
[69:5] as for Thamoud, they were annihilated by the devastating earthquake.
[69:6] As for Aad, they were annihilated by a persistent, violent storm.
[69:7] It unleashed upon them for seven nights and eight days, a violent devastation. You could see all the people tossed around like decayed palm trunks.
[69:8] Can you find any trace of them?
[69:9] Firawn and others before him and all the corrupt ones who were wicked faced the same end.
[69:10] They disobeyed the messengers of their Sustainer. Consequently, He punished them; a devastating reprove.
[69:11] The flood was overwhelming, so We carried you on a floating craft.
[69:12] We rendered it a lesson for you that any listening ear may understand.
[69:13] When the end is signalled,
[69:14] the earth and the mountains will be carried off and crushed. Utterly crushed.
[69:15] That is the day when the inevitable event will come to pass.
[69:16] The heavens will implode and everything will be sucked in.[979]
[69:17] The malaika will be all around and Your Sustainer's dominion will then encompass eight elements.
[69:18] On that day you will be exposed, nothing of your deeds can be hidden.
[69:19] As for the ones who receive a record in their right hand, they will say, "Come read my record.
[69:20] "We did believe that we were going to be held accountable."
[69:21] They have deserved a happy life.
[69:22] In exalted gardens of peace and tranquillity.
[69:23] Its fruits are within reach.
[69:24] Eat and drink happily in return for your works in days past.

[69:25] As for those who are given a record in their left hand, they will say, "Oh, we wish we never received our record.

[979] **The universe** is expanding and once a limit is reached it will contract and implode. See verses 21:104; 51:47.

[69:26] "We wish we never knew our account.
[69:27] "We wish our death was eternal.
[69:28] "Our money cannot help us.
[69:29] "Our power is gone."
[69:30] Take them and shackle them.
[69:31] Burn them in hell.
[69:32] In a chain that is seventy lengths, tie them up.
[69:33] For they did not believe in God, Most Esteemed.
[69:34] Nor did they advocate the feeding of the poor.
[69:35] Consequently, they have no friend here.
[69:36] Nor any food, except the bitter variety.
[69:37] Food for those who are evil.

THE QURAN: STATEMENTS OF AN HONOURABLE MESSENGER

[69:38] I swear by what you see.
[69:39] And what you do not see.
[69:40] These are the declarations of an honourable messenger.[980]
[69:41] Not the words of a poet. Rarely do you believe.
[69:42] Nor the remarks of a mystic. Rarely do you take heed.[981]
[69:43] Indeed, a revelation from the Sustainer of the universe.
[69:44] Had the messenger fabricated any other teachings and attributed them to Us,
[69:45] We would have punished him severely.
[69:46] We would have severed his aorta and cut off his life.
[69:47] And none of you could have helped him.
[69:48] This is a reminder for the righteous.
[69:49] We know many of you are rejecters.
[69:50] It is but sorrow for the disbelievers.
[69:51] It is the absolute truth.
[69:52] Therefore, you shall keep your duty in the name of your Sustainer, The One who is Most Esteemed.

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[980] **The messenger** conveyed the Quran, this guidance, he did not bring anything else nor did he allow people to write down anything that he said, nor did he order anyone to compile traditions about himself. **God's messenger** was encouraged by his people to make-up alternative doctrines. See verse 17:73. Anything other than the Quran attributed to God, such as the narrations termed as *Hadith Qudsi,* (Sacred hadith) or traditions attributed to the messenger, known as *Hadith Sharif* (Noble hadith) are, as this verse shows, in conflict with the Quran. To accept anything as a supplement to the Quran and claim it to be from God is *shirk.* As these verses [69:40-47] show, God would have punished His messenger, if he had fabricated anything and claimed it to be from God. Severe punishment also applies to those who tamper with His message. See verses 2:174; 9:63; 9:68 and 2:22; 4:82; 6:114 & 48:25, and 68:37. See also 5:67; 6:19; 11:13; 21:29 and 17:73; 40:66; 59:21 and 68:37.

[981] **Mysticism** is not a part of Deen-Islam and the messenger was not a mystic. Mysticism degrades and diverts the human being from the realities of life. See verse and footnote 52:29; 57:27.

Sura 70: The Heights (Al-Ma'aarej)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[70:1] A questioner may question the inevitable retribution.
[70:2] For the disbelievers, none can stop it.
[70:3] From God: possessor of the highest authority.
[70:4] The malaika, with direction from Him, ascend in a period that equals fifty thousand years.[982]
[70:5] Therefore, you shall resort to a gracious patience.
[70:6] For they see it far away.
[70:7] While We see it very close.[983]
[70:8] The day will come when from the sky drop molten rocks.[984]
[70:9] The mountains will be like fluffy wool.
[70:10] No friend will care about his close friend.
[70:11] When they see them, the guilty will wish he could give his own children as ransom to spare him the punishment of that day.
[70:12] Also his spouse and his brother.
[70:13] Even his whole family that raised him.
[70:14] Even all the people on earth, if it would save him.
[70:15] No, it is aflame.
[70:16] Eager to burn.
[70:17] It calls on those who turned away.
[70:18] Those who hoarded and counted.
[70:19] Indeed, the human being is restless.
[70:20] If touched by adversity he becomes despondent.
[70:21] If blessed by wealth he becomes stingy.
[70:22] Except for those who are steadfast. [985]
[70:23] Who constantly observe their commitments.
[70:24] Part of their money is set aside.
[70:25] For the poor and the needy.
[70:26] They believe in the established Order.
[70:27] They reverence their Sustainer's law of requital.
[70:28] Their Sustainer's requital is not taken for granted.
[70:29] They maintain their integrity.

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[982] **These are allegorical periods:** in some languages, for example, to say 'we stayed there but for four days' means we stayed only a few days and to say 'thousands' means countless. So numbers are used figuratively and do not necessarily signify the actual count used. See footnote to verse 70:7.
[983] **We live** in a time oriented matrix and even a thousand years is long time. God is not subject to time and He created the heavens and the earth *with* time not *in* time, this is why for God, everything is 'close': past, present and future.
[984] **This could mean** meteorites falling from the sky.
[985] **Steadfast/Committed:** (Arabic: *muSollan.* Root S'L'W. *sing. muSollin pl.*). See also verse and footnote 2:125.

[70:30] They have intimate relations only with their wives; those on whom they have a right.
[70:31] Anyone who transgresses these limits commits an offence.
[70:32] And the believers keep their word; they are trustworthy.
[70:33] Their testimony is truthful.
[70:34] They consistently observe their commitments.
[70:35] They have deserved positions of honour in paradise.
[70:36] What is keeping those who disbelieved from joining you?

[70:37] To the right and to the left, they flee.
[70:38] How can any of them expect to have peace and security?
[70:39] Never, We created them and they know from what.
[70:40] It is We who sustain the Easts and the Wests; We are competent.
[70:41] to substitute better people in your place; We can never be overpowered.
[70:42] Therefore, let them blunder and play, until they meet the day that is awaiting them.
[70:43] That is the day they hasten out of the graves, as if eager to be sacrificed at the altars.
[70:44] With their eyes subdued, shame will cover them. That is the day that is awaiting them.[986]

[986] **The Quranic concept** of the Law of Requital raises a very vital question which requires serious consideration. This law is based strictly on *justice,* so the point for consideration is whether it has any place for *forgiveness* or *mercy*? The reply is both no and yes. If I do some wrong to somebody else, he may forgive me, i.e., may not take revenge on me: but if I do wrong to my own Self, no one can forgive me. Similarly, unconditional mercy is an emotional reaction which has no place in the working of law and justice. Still, there is a place for *protection* (Arabic: *maghfir*), but not unconditional forgiveness or mercy as will be seen from the following example. If you put your finger in a fire and it gets burnt, you must suffer the consequence— the pain and agony which is its inevitable result. There is no question of anybody forgiving you or taking mercy on you. But the same God who has made the law that fire burns and pain is its inevitable result, has made another law, it is that a certain medicine has the property of giving relief to the pain and effacing the devastating result of burning. A recourse to this law of God would do away with the painful result of your former action. The provision of this second law is 'mercy' from God, and obedience of this law results in 'protection' of our wrong doing. This law is as universal as the former one and does not work differently in different individual cases. Nor has it any appeal to emotion. This is the Quranic concept of *protection* and *mercy*. See verses and footnotes 2:58; 50:27; 50:45**. Equity & Equality:** see footnote to verse 10:109.

Sura 71: Noah (Nuh)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[71:1] We sent Noah to his people: "You shall warn your people before a painful retribution afflicts them."
[71:2] He said, "O my people, I am a manifest warner to you.
[71:3] "To alert you that you shall serve God, keep your duty to Him and follow the guidance I bring.
[71:4] "He will then protect you from your errors and respite you for a predetermined period. Most assuredly, God's conclusion can never be delayed, once it is due, if you only knew."
[71:5] He said, "My Sustainer, I have invited my people night and day.
[71:6] "But my invitation only increased their aversion.
[71:7] "Whenever I invited them to be protected by You, they placed their fingers in their ears, covered themselves with their clothes, resisted and turned arrogant.[987]
[71:8] "First I invited them publicly.
[71:9] "And I proclaimed to them loudly and then I spoke to them privately.
[71:10] "I said, implore your Sustainer for protection from your wrongdoing. He is the Protector.
[71:11] " He will then shower you generously with rain for your crops.
[71:12] "And provide you with money and children and orchards and streams."

[71:13] Why should you not strive to do your duty to God?
[71:14] He is the One who evolved you in stages.[988]
[71:15] Do you not realise that God created seven universes in layers?
[71:16] He designed the moon therein to be a reflected light and placed the sun to be a lamp.
[71:17] And God cultivated you from the earth like the plants.[989]
[71:18] Then He returns you into it and He will surely bring you out.
[71:19] God made the earth habitable for you.
[71:20] That you may build roads therein.

[987] **This verse** clearly shows that '...when invited to be protected by God through His guidance brought by His messenger they placed their fingers in their ears, covered themselves with their clothes...' It is the disbelievers (the kafirs) who did the covering from head to foot to avoid being recognised, not the believers. Therefore the mode of dress (such as the Burka) or any similar attire that covers a person and hides their features is not something believers would do. See verses and footnotes 11:5; 24:31; 109:1-6.
[988] **How did life begin?** See verse and footnote 36:82. See also verse 71:17.
[989] **Evolution of mankind** is like the cultivation of plants. See verses and footnotes 11:6; 36:82.

[71:21] Noah said, "My Sustainer, even when blessed with money and children, they ignored me and followed those who were even more corrupted than themselves.
[71:22] "They plotted their terrible schemes.
[71:23] "They said, `Do not abandon your gods. Do not abandon Wadd, Suwaa, Yaghouth, Ya'ooq and Nasr.'
[71:24] "They misled many. Therefore, let the wicked plunge deeper into loss."
[71:25] Because of their crimes they were drowned and assigned to a fiery hellfire of their own making. They found no helpers to protect them from God.
[71:26] Noah also said, "My Sustainer, do not leave a single disbeliever on earth.
[71:27] "For if you let them, they will only mislead your servants and give birth to nothing but more wicked disbelievers.[990]
[71:28] "My Sustainer, protect me and my parents and anyone who enters my System, the established order, as a believer, and all the believing men and women. But do not give the disbelievers anything but misery."[991]

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[990] **People,** left to their own desires will in the main create discord and mayhem, fear and turmoil. It is only by following guidance from God can they return to peace and security - and this they must do of their own 'free will' - what worth is a good deed that is enforced? See verses and footnotes 1:4-5; 2:30; 73:20; 75:40; 94:2.

[991] **God's System:** a religion consists of rites and rituals to appease a deity with pleas for attracting his or her grace and mercy to attain salvation. This can be a system of sorts (those without religious beliefs can also have their own systems) but the Deen-Islam is God's System, the dynamic order for social reform that not only raises the esteem of the individual but has meaning for society at large. God wants to remove you from your system to His System, and make that your system too. As he did with Noah, who in verse 71:28 is seeking protection for his family and those who enter what is now also his system, the System of God. **Traditionalists say** that meaning of the word *bayti-ya* in this context is '*anyone who enters my house*'. This would be a strange statement as Noah made his request during the great flood from his watercraft, which he had built. At that time, his house was in all probability under the water of the flood. Thus the word *bayti-ya* as the Quran uses means the system which Noah subscribed to. It is worth noting that the word for a watercraft such as a ship or boat, as used in the Quran, is *fulk.* See verses 22:65; 37:140. So Noah could not have been referring to his boat. **Bayta is a system** not 'a house.' The word *bayta* cannot mean a *house*. According to the Quran a house is called *buyu-ta* [Verse 2.189] or *buyu-ti* [verse 4.15). The word houses are referred to as *buyu-tan* [24.29]. Also the word *bayti-ya* does not mean *My House* therefore *baytul-lah* is not God's house. According to the Quran *bayti-ya* means *My System*. See verses and footnotes 8:5; 2:125; 22:26; 22:65; 29:41; 33:33. **Every one** of us initially follows our own *system* or *Bayti*. When an individual ignites his search for the truth God's ordinance proceeds to remove him from *his* system with the truth to His *system* or *Bayti.* There is no physical shift but a change in thinking to believe, accept and apply God's guidance. **Bayti-ya:** This word appears in the Quran three times. Verses 2.125 & 22.26 which refers to *God's system* and verse 71.28 it refers to Noah's system. The word 'system' *(bayti)* and 'house' *(buyu-ti)* are both mentioned in verses 33.33-34. The word *buyu-ti* in verses 4.15 and *buyuti-kun* in verses 33.33-34 are derivatives of the same word. The former refers to the singular and the later is suffixed with the word '*kun*' to signify the plural addressed to the messenger's wives to mean '*your houses*'. **Bayt:** system, plan, scheme, way. See verses 2:127; 12:23; 17:93; 28:12; 66:11. See Arabic: the Language of the Quran in the Prologue section.

Sura 72: The Hidden (Al-Jinn)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[72:1] Say: "It was revealed to me that a group of undistinguished ones listened then said, `We have heard a wonderful Quran, a profound recitation.[992]
[72:2] " `It guides to righteousness and we have believed in it. We will never set up any authority besides our Sustainer.
[72:3] " `The Most High is our only Sustainer. He never had a spouse, neither did He have a son.
[72:4] "It was those among us who went beyond the excesses who uttered such nonsense about God.[993]
[72:5] "We thought that neither the prominent people or any of the jinn: the rabble inhabiting the fringes of the town, could possibly utter such lies about God.
[72:6] "The prominent people used to seek power through the undistinguished hordes, but they only afflicted them with a lot of adversity.
[72:7] " `They thought, just like you thought, that God would not resurrect the dead.
[72:8] "We tried to reach the heaven but it is has formidable safeguards with projectiles.
[72:9] "We used to sit around in order to spy. Anyone who listens is pursued by a powerful projectile.
[72:10] "We have no idea if something bad is intended for the inhabitants of earth or if their Sustainer wills to redeem them.
[72:11] "Some of us are righteous and some are less than righteous. We follow various paths.
[72:12] "We knew full well that we can never run away from God on earth. We can never run away and escape.
[72:13] "When we heard this guidance, we believed therein. Anyone who believes in his Sustainer will never fear any injustice, nor any affliction.
[72:14] "Among us are the submitters and among us are the compromisers." As for those who submitted, they are on the right path.

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[992] **Undistinguished ones:** (Arabic: *Jinn*). Jinn means anyone or anything out of view or undistinguished. The jinn mentioned here are the common people of lower classes living an undistinguished life out of sight on the edges of society. Anything that is veiled or invisible can also be referred to as *jinn*. Before birth, all humans were 'jinns': veiled in their mothers' wombs. [Verse 53:32]. Shaitan, the negative egotistic aspect of the Self is an invisible feature of the human psyche. Also known as Iblees, a facet of our free Self, *became* a jinn, the hidden aspect of the human psyche: the Self. **Jinn:** See verses and footnotes 18:50; 53:32.

[993] **Going beyond excesses:** unreasonable, Intemperate, lacking in self-control, lacking in self-restraint. (Arabic: *safaha.* Root S'F'H). See verses 2:130.

[72:15] As for the compromisers, they will be fuel for hell.
[72:16] If they move to the straight and balanced path, We will bless them with rain in abundance.
[72:17] We will surely test them all. As for him who disregards this message of his Sustainer, He will direct him to an ever increasing retribution.
[72:18] The submissions belong to God. Do not call on anyone else beside God.
[72:19] When God's servant advocated service to Him alone, almost all of them grouped together to oppose him.

[72:20] Say: "I serve only the One who sustains me. I will never set up any authority to rival or equal Him."
[72:21] Say: "I possess no power to harm you, nor to guide you."[994]
[72:22] Say: "No one can protect me from God, nor can I find any other refuge besides Him.
[72:23] "I deliver God's complete message." Those who disobey God and His messenger incur the fire of hell, wherein they abide forever.[995]
[72:24] Once they see what is awaiting for them, they will find out who is really weaker in power and fewer in number.
[72:25] Say: "I do not know if what is promised to you will happen soon or if my Sustainer will delay it for a while."
[72:26] He is the knower of the future. He does not reveal the future to anyone.
[72:27] Of the messengers whom He chooses, there are protectors before and after them
[72:28] to ascertain that they have delivered their Sustainer's complete revelations. He is fully aware of what they deliver and holds to account all things.[996]

[994] **Those who idolise** the messenger should heed this warning that Muhammad was no more than a messenger with no power to guide, although he lived his life according to the Quranic values to be a *guiding example*. See verses 33:21 and 17:73; 18:110; 40:66.
[995] **Complete,** entire. Anything that reaches a stage of completion after a developing period. (Arabic: *balagata.* Root B'L'GH). See verse and footnote 46:35.
[996] **The Quran** is complete and perfect and was delivered fully and completely, these verses assures us of this fact. From this it is evident that any supplementary literature which is in conflict with this guidance should be rejected. See verses 4:42; 6:114; 69:40-47.

Sura 73: The Protected (Al-Muzzammil)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[73:1] You are cloaked by a protecting ambience.
[73:2] Meditate often during the night,
[73:3] Sometimes half of it, sometimes a little less.
[73:4] and sometimes a little more and reflect on this profound Quran, the insightful narration.
[73:5] We will give you a powerful message of guidance.

[73:6] The meditation at night is more effective and more righteous.
[73:7] During the day there are other matters to occupy you.
[73:8] You shall fulfil your duty in the name of your Sustainer and come ever closer and closer to Him.

[73:9] Sustainer of the East and the West, there is no other authority to rival or equal Him. You should choose Him as your supporter.
[73:10] And remain steadfast in the face of what those in opposition say and disregard them in a manner most kind.
[73:11] And let Me deal with the rejecters of this guidance, who have been generously blessed, just give them a little latitude.
[73:12] We have for them severe punishment and the fury of a hell of their own making where
[73:13] food that can hardly be swallowed and painful retribution awaits.
[73:14] The day will come when the earth and the mountains will quake and the mountains will turn into a weightless mass.

[73:15] We have sent to you a messenger, just as We sent to Firawn a messenger.
[73:16] Firawn disobeyed Our messenger and We seized him with a firm grip.

[73:17] If you reject this profound guidance, how can you evade a day so terrible that it can even make the infants grey-haired?
[73:18] The heavens will disintegrate. His promise will be fulfilled.
[73:19] This is a reminder: whoever wills, let him choose the path to his Sustainer.

[73:20] Your Sustainer knows when you meditate and study during the night, or half of it or one-third of it, and so do some of those who believed with you. God has designed the night and the day and He knows that you cannot always do this. Instead, you shall study what you can of the Quran. He knows that some of you may be ill, others may have set forth on a journey in pursuit of God's provisions and others may be striving in the

cause of God. You shall learn what you can of it and observe your commitments and keep them pure and lend God a loan of righteousness. Whatever good you send ahead on behalf of your Self, you will find it at God far better and generously rewarded. And implore God for protection. God is Protector and the One Most Merciful.[997]

[997] **Evil and Sin:** Man often goes astray. As a free being, it is his privilege. When he commits a mistake, he has to pay the price for it and in the process he realises that he is fully responsible for his action and that the freedom he enjoys is real and not illusory. To err is human, and it is natural for man to commit a mistake now and again. If he acts wrongly, his Self is stained, but the stain can be removed. If he realises his mistakes and sincerely tries to make amends for his wrong-doing, he can recover his poise. This is the truth that is clearly set forth in the Quran. The Quran gives hope. It forbids man to give way to despair. A man may have led a wrong life for years but if he resolutely turns his face in the right direction and persists in acting rightly, he will not find the path to Self-realisation blocked for all time. Right actions nullify wrong actions. The man who is saved is not one who has never committed a mistake, which is impossible, but one whose right actions outweigh his wrong actions. See Verses 23:102-103.

Salvation, according to the Quran, is not liberation from 'evil', evil in ourselves or in the world. To achieve salvation is to prove one's fitness for entering on a higher plane of existence. Reward and punishment are wrongly conceived as coming from external source. They are the natural consequences of what we do and think, and manifest themselves in the enrichment or impoverishment of our Self. Heaven and Hell do not exist outside us, somewhere in the outer space. They are states of the Self. Hell is the state in which the Self finds its progress blocked. Heaven is the state in which the way to development lies open to the Self. To cease to aspire is to be doomed to Hell, to be able to aspire is to be in Heaven. **Intercession:** There is, therefore, no room for intercession in Deen-Islam. What we become, we become through our own actions. We cannot carry the burden of any other person and no one can relieve us of the burden we bear. **The concept of sin** must also be reformulated so as to bring it into harmony with the above view. Sin should not be conceived as the taint of evil that clings to the soul from birth, being either the legacy of our forefathers or the result of our own previous life. Sin is the ill effect on our Self of our own wrong doing. It can be obliterated by our own right action and not by the action of anyone else. If we have committed wrong unwillingly, heedlessly or even with our eyes open, we can draw solace from the reflection that we hold the remedy in our hands. See verses and footnotes 2:183; 63:11. **THE SELF: Development** with adversity/ hardship 94:3-8. only those distinguished deserve a state of harmony 3:142. the testing path 90:10-20. evolve from form to another 23:14; 84:19. weak Self struggles 32:12. world a matrix for development 21:111. underdeveloped Self will suffer 101:8. good works strengthen the Self 30:44. tests of adversity to develop Self 6:42. lifespan/ time to develop Self 6:128. Self departs undeveloped 9:85. people exalt themselves/ God exalts you 4:92. mature Self progresses/ weak Self struggles 23:102-103. everyone will judge what regressed/progresses them 75:14. all good sent ahead/ loan to God 73:20. **Reward by endeavour** 20:15; 6:132. virtue of deeds 26:89. reward for good work 39:10. paradise created by good works 7:43. each Self paid for what it earned 14:51. only free will deeds progress 23:89. God never fails to recompense the righteous 12:56-57. everyone paid without the lease injustice/ attain ranks according to their deeds 46:9. Those who defy their common sense devalue and weaken their Self by their regressive deeds 10:100.

Sura 74: The Open Secret (Al-Muddath-thir)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[74:1] O you who have been entrusted with this guidance;
[74:2] Awake from your slumber and warn mankind.
[74:3] Keep your duty to your Sustainer.
[74:4] Purify your environment.
[74:5] Condemn what is wrong.
[74:6] Don't suffer the self-indulgent.
[74:7] Steadfastly persevere in the path of your Sustainer.

[74:8] Then, when the signal is given,
[74:9] That will be a difficult day.
[74:10] For those who rejected this guidance, it will not be easy.
[74:11] Let Me deal with one We created as an individual.
[74:12] We provided him with wealth.
[74:13] And children as his strength.
[74:14] We made everything easy for him.
[74:15] Yet, he is greedy for more.
[74:16] He stubbornly refused to accept My signs.
[74:17] We will increasingly punish him.
[74:18] For he reflected on the truth, then decided.
[74:19] Miserable is what he decided.
[74:20] Miserable indeed is what he decided.
[74:21] He considered the truth again.
[74:22] His mind was in a tussle with itself.
[74:23] Then he turned away in arrogance and pride.
[74:24] He said, "This is nothing but clever sorcery.
[74:25] "This is man-made."
[74:26] My ordinance will give him his just desserts.
[74:27] What a recompense that spares no miscreant.
[74:28] Thorough, complete and conclusive.
[74:29] It changes the punished forever more.
[74:30] Just one and nineteen more penalties.[998]

[74:31] We appointed some of the malaika to be guardians of hell and We assigned their number to disturb the disbelievers and as a reflection for believers of this guidance and to strengthen their belief. Also to remove all traces of doubt from the hearts of those who received the previous scripture, as well as the believers, and to expose those who harbour doubt

[998] **These are allegorical numbers that** are used figuratively and do not necessarily signify the actual count used. To attach any unsubstantiated significance to any number is a gross error.

in their hearts. The disbelievers will say, "What did God mean by this allegory?" They thus move astray from God's enlightenment, and He guides according to His ordinance. No one knows the forces of your Sustainer except He. This is a reminder for all the people.

[74:32] Absolutely, I swear by the precision of the moon.
[74:33] And the night as it passes.
[74:34] And the morning as it shines.
[74:35] This is one of the great signs.
[74:36] A warning to mankind.
[74:37] For those among you who wish to advance or regress.
[74:38] Every Self is shackled by its wrongs.

[74:39] Except for those on the right path.
[74:40] While in Paradise, they will ask
[74:41] about the guilty.
[74:42] "What brought you to this retribution?"
[74:43] They will say, "We did not observe our commitments.[999]
[74:44] "We did not feed the poor.
[74:45] "We were wrongdoers with those who blundered.
[74:46] "We disbelieved in the established Order.
[74:47] "Until certainty came to us now."
[74:48] The intercession of those whom we honoured will never help us.[1000]
[74:49] Why are they so averse to this reminder?
[74:50] Running like zebras.
[74:51] Who are fleeing from a lion.
[74:52] Does each one of them want to receive the scripture personally?
[74:53] Indeed, they do not fear the Hereafter.
[74:54] Indeed, this is a reminder.
[74:55] For those who wish to take heed.
[74:56] They cannot accept this guidance against God's ordinance. He is the One who safeguards your righteousness. He is the source of all protection.

[999] **Commitments:** (Arabic: *solaa.* Root S'L'W. Derivative: *muSollan* sing. *MuSollin* pl.). See also verse and footnote 2:125.
[1000] **Intercession** is undeserved favouritism. See corresponding footnote to verse 2:254.

Sura 75: The Resurrection (Al-Qayamah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[75:1] I swear by the Day of Resurrection which will occur.
[75:2] And I swear by the Self that blames all others but itself.
[75:3] Does the human being think that We are unable to reconstruct his bones?
[75:4] Indeed We can. We are able to reconstruct even your genetic print.
[75:5] But the human being tends to believe only what he sees.
[75:6] He doubts the Day of Resurrection.
[75:7] Once his vision is sharpened.
[75:8] And the moon is eclipsed.
[75:9] And the sun and the moon collide into one another.
[75:10] The human being will ask on that day, "Where is the escape?"
[75:11] Absolutely, there is no escape.
[75:12] To your Sustainer on that day is your final return.
[75:13] Then you will be informed, on that day, of everything you did to advance your Self and everything you did to regress your Self.
[75:14] You will be your own judge.
[75:15] No excuses will be accepted.

IT IS GOD WHO EXPLAINS THE QURAN

[75:16] Do not move your tongue to hasten this revelation.
[75:17] It is We who will collect it into the Quran: a recitation.
[75:18] Once We reveal it, you shall follow this Quran: a profound recitation.[1001]
[75:19] Then it is We who will explain it.
[75:20] Indeed, you love this fleeting life.
[75:21] While disregarding the Hereafter.
[75:22] Some faces on that day will be happy.
[75:23] Looking at their Sustainer.
[75:24] Other faces on that day will be miserable.
[75:25] Expecting the worst.
[75:26] Term completed, the Self departs from the body.
[75:27] And the body is commanded to let it go.
[75:28] He knows it is the end.
[75:29] The body will lay lifeless and motionless.
[75:30] To your Sustainer on that day is the summoning.
[75:31] For he was neither sincere nor fulfilled his commitments.

[1001] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R. Derivatives: *quran, qara'a*). Verses 75:16-19 say that anyone who reads this Quran is the recipient of this revelation and those sincerely seeking the truth will find the guidance clearly explained. See verses and 2:185.

[75:32] But he rejected this guidance and turned away.
[75:33] Towards his family, he acted arrogantly.
[75:34] Misery to you.
[75:35] Indeed, misery to you.
[75:36] Does the human being think that he will go to nothing?
[75:37] Was he not a drop of ejected semen?
[75:38] Then God's ordinance developed it into an embryo.
[75:39] His ordinance gave it gender of a male or a female.
[75:40] Is He then unable to revive the dead?[1002]

[1002] **Immortality** does not imply eternity. Eternity belongs to God alone. It is also beyond our power to formulate a precise definition of immortality. It refers to stages of existence which transcend human calculation. All we can say, and all we need know is that life has no end. When we attain a higher stage, new vistas are opened up for our ambition. It is the nature of life to move forward unceasingly. The Self in which the movement is retarded or arrested, suffers the torments of Hell.

From the Quranic point of view, there is a great difference between "survival after death" and "immortality." While survival is for every human being who has attained self-consciousness, immortality is only for those who have developed their self and have thus qualified themselves for higher planes of life after death.

No doubt, individuals who do good will reap the harvest in the life yet to come, but actions which lead to the realisation of higher values are requited in this life as well. The Quran's teaching is not for the next life alone: it attaches due importance to this world as well. Good actions enhance life and confer on us the gift of happiness. The full fruit of realised values may be possible only in the hereafter but we can get a preview of the joys of heaven in this life also. Of course, the final success or failure of a life can be known only when that life has run its course. At any stage in life, the next step might be in the right or wrong direction. The balance-sheet of life is possible only when it has ended. Nevertheless, reward is not withheld from good people during this life. Their good deeds bring peace and security. Good action does not benefit the doer alone. Its beneficial effect pervades the world and helps to make it a better place, the home of goodness, beauty and truth. The good man realises himself through serving his fellow-beings. He, therefore, contributes his life to the creation of a social environment in which truth and justice prevail and in which each individual enjoys the right to express and develop himself in his own way. To create such a social atmosphere has always been the aim of Deen-Islam. Religions are primarily concerned with the salvation of individual men, while others are preoccupied with the stability and efficiency of human society. Deen-Islam seeks to create a social milieu in which the human personality may function freely and grow to its full stature. See verses and footnotes 36:81; 90:4.

Sura 76: The Human (Al-Insaan)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[76:1] Is it not a fact that there was a time when the human being was nothing?
[76:2] We created the human from a viscous liquid, then evolved him to realise within his Self an intense potential. Thus, We made him a hearer and gave him sight and insight.
[76:3] We showed him the two paths; then he is either appreciative or ungrateful of Our guidance.
[76:4] For those who reject, We prepared mental chains, shackles, and a fiery hell for a conscience.[1003]
[76:5] As for the virtuous, they will have spiced drinks from cups flavoured with nectar.
[76:6] A spring that is reserved for God's servants will gush out as and when they desire.
[76:7] They are the ones that fulfil their pledges and reverence a day that is extremely difficult.[1004]
[76:8] They donate of the same food they enjoy to the poor, the orphan and the captives and say:
[76:9] "We feed you, mindful of our duty to God and we expect no reward from you or thanks.
[76:10] "We fear from our Sustainer a day that is full of misery and trouble, should we do wrong."
[76:11] Consequently, God protects them from the evils of that day and rewards them with joy and contentment.
[76:12] He rewards them for their steadfastness with harmony and good things.
[76:13] They relax therein on luxurious furnishings. They suffer neither the heat of the sun or any cold.
[76:14] The shade covers them therein and the fruits are brought within reach.
[76:15] They are served drinks in silver containers and cups that are translucent.
[76:16] Translucent cups, though made of silver. They rightly deserve all this.
[76:17] They enjoy drinks of delicious flavours.
[76:18] From a spring therein known as "Salsabeel."
[76:19] Serving them will be honourable servants. When you see them, they are gentle, dignified and protected.

[1003] **Chains, shackles and hell:** all these are allegorical terms. Mental bondage can be equally suppressive as can any chain or shackle. The torment of a guilty conscience? No eye can see, no tongue can tell the torture of the inward hell.
[1004] **Pledge:** promise, covenant. We all have a contract with God. See verses and footnotes 5:1-7; 7:172; 48:10; 57:8.

[76:20] Wherever you look, you will see tranquillity and a wonderful dominion.
[76:21] On them will be clothes of green velvet, satin and silver ornaments. Their Sustainer will provide them with pure drinks.
[76:22] This is the reward that awaits you, for your efforts have been appreciated.[1005]

[76:23] We have revealed to you this Quran, an exceptional guidance from Us.
[76:24] You shall steadfastly carry out your Sustainer's commandments and do not obey any corrupt rejecter from among the disbelievers.
[76:25] And keep your duty in the name of your Sustainer day and night.
[76:26] Even during the night, keep your submissions to Him and honour Him many a long night.
[76:27] These people are preoccupied with this fleeting life, while disregarding just ahead of them a heavy day.
[76:28] We created them and established them and whenever We will, We can substitute others in their place.
[76:29] This is a reminder: whoever wills shall choose the path to his Sustainer.[1006]
[76:30] Whatever you choose is delivered in accordance with God's ordinance. God is aware and most Wise.
[76:31] He admits into His mercy in consistence with His ordinance. As for the transgressors, He has prepared for them a painful retribution.

[1005] **The descriptions** of those in a state of peace and tranquillity are allegorical terms, as we would not be able to grasp the true nature of the experience yet to come, the same as a thousand years ago no-one would have been able to understand the quality of life or variety and abundance of food we have today. However, paradise begins here and what we create for ourselves, so these descriptions may be true for the few who are experiencing them in this life. **Destiny:** see verse and footnote 97:1.
[1006] **Choice is paramount** in personal development: predestination or fatalism has no place in Deen-Islam. See verse and footnote 2:108.

Sura 77: The Dispatched (Al-Mursalaat)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[77:1] The forces dispatched in succession.
[77:2] To drive the wind.
[77:3] Stir up clouds.
[77:4] Distribute the provisions.
[77:5] Deliver messages.
[77:6] Good news, as well as warnings.

[77:7] What is promised will come to pass.
[77:8] Thus, when the stars are put out.
[77:9] The sky is opened up.
[77:10] The mountains rise up.
[77:11] The messengers are summoned.
[77:12] That is the appointed day.
[77:13] The Day of Decision.
[77:14] What a Day of Decision!

[77:15] Misery on that day to the rejecters.
[77:16] Did We not annihilate the earlier generations?
[77:17] Then We made others succeed them?
[77:18] This is what We do to the corrupt and the criminals.
[77:19] Misery on that day to the rejecters.
[77:20] Did We not create you from a lowly liquid?
[77:21] Then We placed you in a well-protected repository.
[77:22] For a specific period.
[77:23] We measured it precisely. We are the best designers.
[77:24] Misery on that day to the rejecters.
[77:25] Did We not make the earth an abode?
[77:26] For the living and the dead?
[77:27] We placed on it high mountains and provided you with fresh water to drink.

[77:28] Misery on that day to the rejecters.
[77:29] Go to what you used to disbelieve in.
[77:30] Go to a shade of three different densities.
[77:31] Yet it provides neither coolness nor protection from the heat.
[77:32] It throws sparks as high as hills.
[77:33] As yellow as the colour of camels.
[77:34] Misery on that day to the rejecters.
[77:35] That is the day they do not speak.
[77:36] Nor are they given permission to apologise.

[77:37] Misery on that day to the rejecters.
[77:38] This is the Day of Decision. We have summoned you and the previous generations.
[77:39] If you have plotted and planned, where are your schemes now?
[77:40] Misery on that day to the rejecters.

[77:41] The righteous will enjoy shade and springs.
[77:42] And fruits that they desire.
[77:43] Eat and drink happily in return for your works.
[77:44] We thus reward the virtuous.

[77:45] Misery on that day to the rejecters.
[77:46] Eat and enjoy temporarily. You are the guilty ones.
[77:47] Misery on that day to the rejecters.
[77:48] When they are told, "Acknowledge this guidance," they do not accept.
[77:49] Misery on that day to the rejecters.
[77:50] Which hadith, other than this, do you uphold?[1007]

[1007] **Message:** (Arabic: *hadith*). Upholding hadith that conflicts with this Hadith, the Quran, is the same as rejecting the Quran and tantamount to setting up an authority to equal God. This is a treachery of the most heinous kind. See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37. People wanted the messenger to change the revelation to something else more acceptable to them: See verses 17:73-75; 69:38-52. See also verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37; 80: 42. **The majority of the people** are adrift and follow only conjecture. The average person rejects what his society rejects and accepts only what his society accepts. This is not team spirit but herd mentality: mental bondage, the prevalent culture, that people find they cannot set themselves free from. In such a situation the person becomes incapable of independent thinking. He becomes incapable of stepping out of the mould imposed on him since childhood. In order to break out the person need not be rebellious but should seek the truth. See verses 6:116; 12:106. **Drifter:** see also 15:42 & 7:179.

Sura 78: The Event (Al-Naba)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[78:1] What are they questioning?
[78:2] The great event,
[78:3] that is disputed by them?

[78:4] Indeed, they will find out.
[78:5] Most assuredly, they will find out.
[78:6] Did We not make the earth a habitable expanse?
[78:7] And the mountains as stabilisers?
[78:8] We created you as companions for one another.
[78:9] We created sleep, so you can rest.
[78:10] We made the darkness of night a cover.
[78:11] And the day to seek provisions.
[78:12] We built above you seven universes.
[78:13] We created the sun as a bright lamp.
[78:14] We send down from the clouds pouring water.
[78:15] To produce grains and plants.
[78:16] And various orchards.

[78:17] The Day of Decision is appointed.
[78:18] The day the end is signalled and you come out in throngs.
[78:19] The heavens will be opened like gates.
[78:20] The mountains will be removed as if they were a mirage.
[78:21] The state of hell is inevitable.
[78:22] For the transgressors, it will be their abode.
[78:23] They stay in it for ages.
[78:24] They never taste in it coolness nor a drink that quenches.
[78:25] Only an inferno and bitter food.
[78:26] A just punishment.
[78:27] They never expected to be held accountable.
[78:28] And utterly rejected Our signs.
[78:29] We have counted everything in a record.
[78:30] Suffer the consequences. Your retribution increases with your corruption and crimes.

[78:31] The righteous have deserved a reward.
[78:32] Orchards and grapes.
[78:33] Magnificent companions.
[78:34] Delicious drinks.
[78:35] They will never hear in it any nonsense or lies.
[78:36] A reward from your Sustainer, a generous recompense.

[78:37] Sustainer of the heavens and the earth and everything between them. The Most Gracious. No one can abrogate His decisions.
[78:38] The day will come when the malaika who witnessed are directed to present their records. None will speak except those permitted by the Most Gracious and they will speak the truth and nothing but the truth.
[78:39] Such is the inevitable day. Whoever wills, let him take refuge with his Sustainer.
[78:40] We have sufficiently warned you about an imminent retribution. That is the day when everyone will examine what his hands have sent forth and those who rejected this guidance will say, "Oh, I wish I were dust."[1008]

[1008] **Sahih al-Bukhari:** Authentic Bukhari. Hadith narrations compiled by Imam Bukhari are considered to be the most accurate in Sunni hadith literature so it deserves special attention. The most widely used edition is the nine volume encyclopedia by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Islamic University Medina Al-Munawwara. These traditions were collected by the Sunni imam Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari and published during his lifetime. He was a scholar from Bukhara, Uzbekistan (once part of the Persian empire) hence the name by which he is known. **Al-Bukhari** belonged to the Shafi'i sub-sect, one of four major schools of thought in the Sunni religion. He travelled widely throughout the Abbasid empire, collecting traditions attributed to Muhammad, the messenger of God. It is said that al-Bukhari collected over 300,000 hadith and transmitted only the 2,602 traditions that he believed to be authentic. This tome of Bukhari is reputed to have taken over 16 years. It is also said that Bukhari, before writing any hadith in this book, performed the ritual ablution and two units of ritual prayer asking guidance from God. **This collection of hadith** is now accepted by Sunnis to be second only to the Quran. In some cases, the belief is that Sahih Bukhari can repeal even the Quranic injunctions. Such is the position these Hadith are given by the adherents. However, while God has guaranteed to protect the Quran, the same protection is not available for these hadith. Masses of people transmitting a message is no proof and no guarantee that a message could not have been adulterated. Christian and Jewish teachings too have been handed down by oral and written traditions but they are not free from errors. **Imam Bukhari** rejected over 292,725 hadith as false. Can anyone imagine that Bukhari's contemporaries and their predecessors were for almost 200 years religiously following nearly 300,000 false Hadith? Did Bukhari go back to his sources and advise them to stop propagating all these false hadith? If not, then the false Hadith would continue to spread for many years until his written words began to proliferate. Bukhari does not seem to have mentioned any special conditions laid down by him for the acceptance of hadith. In common with other hadith compilers, Bukhari has not even given the Quran as a source for measuring the truthfulness of any hadith in his compilation. **The hadith of Bukhari** covers many aspects of life such as how to perform the ritual prayers (although no complete liturgy or method is given) and other actions of worship. Volume 6 is said to be the explanation of the Quran and taking a closer look at this will give a revealing insight into authenticity of Bukhari's Sahih hadith. **The Quran** has 114 chapters (Suras) but many of them are without reference in Bukhari and only 50 verses of chapter Al-Baqarah are explained, although there are 286 verses. In Sura al-Kausar, [Sura 108] the shortest chapter with only 3 verses, only the meaning of the title is attempted by Bukhari while the main text is ignored. Also the following 29 chapters have been left unexplained with a note *'no Hadith was mentioned here'.* 23, 27, 29, 35, 51, 57, 58, 64, 67, 68, 69, 70, 73, 76, 81, 82, 82, 86, 88, 89, 90, 94, 100, 101, 103, 104, 105, 106 and 109. As Sunni scholars rely on the hadith to explain the Quran, with such shortcomings it appears that this argument has no support. **Bukhari** was of Persian origin and perhaps not familiar with Arabic. This is confirmed by the way he presents his explanations. Instead of using sura names he refers to them by using the fist line. The value of Sahih Bukhari is

Sura 79: The Snatchers (Al-Nazi'aat)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[79:1] The malaika who forcibly rip out the souls of the disbelievers.
[79:2] And the malaika who gently lift up the developed Self of the believers.
[79:3] And the malaika are everywhere.
[79:4] Eagerly and with haste cooperating with one another
[79:5] to carry out diverse commands.
[79:6] The day the earth quakes.
[79:7] Followed by the second blow.
[79:8] Certain minds will be terrified.
[79:9] Their eyes will be subdued.
[79:10] They will say, "We have risen from our graves,
[79:11] "How did this happen after we had turned into rotten bones?"
[79:12] They had said, "This is an impossible recurrence."
[79:13] All it takes is one nudge.
[79:14] Whereupon they get up.

[79:15] Have you heard about the history of Moses?[1009]
[79:16] His Sustainer called him at the consecrated valley of Tuwaa.
[79:17] "Go to Firawn: he has transgressed."
[79:18] Tell him, "Will you not purify yourself?[1010]
[79:19] "Let me guide you to your Sustainer, that you may keep your duty to Him."
[79:20] He then showed him a great sign.
[79:21] But he rejected and rebelled.
[79:22] Then he turned away in a hurry.
[79:23] He summoned and proclaimed.
[79:24] He said, "I am your Sustainer, most high."
[79:25] Consequently, God committed him to the retribution in the Hereafter, as well as in the first life.
[79:26] This is a lesson for the reverent.

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diminished when you see the large amounts of text missing or information not included. Dr. Syed Abdul Wadud's book 'Conspiracies Against The Quran', amongst other things examines the Persian influence in diverting people away from the Quran by using fabricated hadith such as found in Sahih Bukhari. Wadud's book is an excellent piece of work and well worth reading. **God revealed** the best Hadith, a consistent message, balanced and reliable... [Verse 39:23. **Whose hadith is more truthful than God's?** God: there is no authority to rank with Him. [Verse 4:87]. See *'The Traditions of hadith'* in the Concepts section at the back and also verses and footnotes 4:42 and 68:37. See also verses and footnotes 17:73; 48:25; 68:37; 80:42. See also verse 25:30.

[1009] **History:** (Arabic: *hadith*). See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.

[1010] **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*). Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. See verse 2:43 and footnote.

[79:27] Are you more difficult to create than the heavens He constructed.
[79:28] He raised its masses and perfected it.
[79:29] He made its night dark and brightened its morning.
[79:30] He made the earth egg-shaped.[1011]
[79:31] From the earth He produced its own water and pasture.
[79:32] He established the mountains.
[79:33] All this to provide an environment for you and your animals.

[79:34] Then, when the great blow comes.
[79:35] That is the day when the human will remember everything he did.
[79:36] And a forceful state of hell will be brought into existence.
[79:37] As for the one who transgresses.
[79:38] Who is preoccupied with this life.
[79:39] Hell will be his abode.
[79:40] As for those who reverence the status of their Sustainer and refrain themselves from their lusts.[1012]
[79:41] Paradise will be his abode.
[79:42] They ask you about the End and when it will take place.
[79:43] It is not the messenger who is destined to announce its time.
[79:44] Your Sustainer decides its time, according to His ordinance.
[79:45] Your mission is to warn those who expect it.
[79:46] The day they see it, they will feel as if they lasted only a short period, half a day or less.[1013]

[1011] **This is a simple** description of the shape of the world which is really not round but an oblate spheroid.
[1012] **Status:** (Arabic: *maqam*). Be aware of your Sustainer's status and respond accordingly by fulfilling your obligations, because to Him you are accountable. See verse and footnote 2:125.
[1013] **The messenger** brought no new guidance and neither could he foretell the future. See verses and footnotes 6:50; 42:13; 46:9.

Sura 80: The Frowning (Abasa)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[80:1] The messenger frowned and turned away.[1014]
[80:2] When the blind man came to him.
[80:3] How do you know? He may purify himself;
[80:4] he may take heed and benefit from the message.
[80:5] As for the rich man.
[80:6] You gave him your attention.
[80:7] Even though you could not guarantee his salvation.
[80:8] The one who came to you eagerly.
[80:9] And is really reverent.
[80:10] You ignored him.

[80:11] Indeed, this is a reminder.
[80:12] Whoever wills shall take heed.
[80:13] In honourable revealed guidance.
[80:14] Exalted and pure.
[80:15] Written by the hands of scribes.
[80:16] Who are worthy and righteous.
[80:17] Misery to the human being. He is so unappreciative.
[80:18] What did He create him from?
[80:19] From a tiny drop, He creates him and develops him.
[80:20] Then He points out the path for him.
[80:21] Then He puts him to death and into the grave.
[80:22] And according to His ordinance, He resurrects him.
[80:23] He should uphold His commandments.

[80:24] Let the human consider his food.
[80:25] We pour the water generously.
[80:26] Then We split the seed, the soil opens,
[80:27] We grow in it grains.
[80:28] Grapes and pasture.
[80:29] Olives and palms.
[80:30] A variety of orchards.
[80:31] Fruits and vegetables.
[80:32] To provide life support for you and your animals.

[1014] **The messenger** ignored a blind man who came to listen in order that he may receive some guidance. Here the messenger is admonished for ignoring him and clearly showing that a human error had been made by the messenger who totally misjudged the situation. See verses 7:188; 28:56; 33:37; 41:6; 46:9; 60:12. There were other occasions when the messenger erred and was corrected by God. See verses and footnotes 40:66; 68:48. See also verses 17:73-75.

[80:33] Then, when the blow comes to pass.
[80:34] That is the day when one flees from his brother.
[80:35] From his mother and father.
[80:36] From his spouse and children.
[80:37] Each one of them on that day worries about his own end.
[80:38] Some faces on that day will be happy.
[80:39] Laughing and joyful.
[80:40] Other faces on that day will be covered with misery.
[80:41] Overwhelmed by remorse.
[80:42] These are the wicked disbelievers.[1015]

[1015] **Obey God, obey the messenger:** Undoubtedly one of the most manipulated phrases in the Quran. The advocates of hadith, traditions attributed to the messenger, use the command 'obey God and obey the messenger' to advocate the legitimacy of following the hadith as a source of religious jurisdiction. They claim that obeying God is to obey the Quran whilst obeying the messenger means to obey his 'hadith', the sayings attributed to him, and the 'sunnah' the ways of the messenger as found in the traditional cannons of hadith literature. They add that if obeying the messenger was the same as obeying the Quran, then God would have only said "Obey God". Thus according to their understanding, God's inclusion of "Obey the messenger" implies that the messenger had his own supplementary explanations to the Quran and which muslims must therefore obey. However, with verses from the Quran, the error in this claim can easily be exposed. In the light of the Quran it can easily be seen that to "Obey the messenger" is to obey the *message* he delivered (the Quran) and not anything else.
1- Why does the Quran say 'Obey the messenger'? The inclusion of the phrase "Obey the messenger" after "Obey God" serves a number of important purposes:
A- Who among the companions of the messenger ever heard any of God's revelations directly from God? None. Consequently, they cannot obey God except through messenger's delivery of the Quran. The Quran came out of Muhammad's mouth. This makes it necessary for God to command people to obey the messenger since he is the one who delivers to them God's message. Moreover, the messenger did not just deliver the Quran and vanish. The messenger spent all his years from the time he received the first revelation till his death inviting all people to believe in the Quran and to follow it. Hence it is necessary for God to command all humans to obey the messenger who is inviting them to accept the message, the Quran.
B- The Quran was revealed to Muhammad in order that he would deliver it to a community which was primarily composed of *mushriq* (those who followed religious doctrines that contradicted Quranic injunctions) and also some followers of the previous scripture like the Jews and the Christians. Once again, and for the benefit of the followers of the scripture, we understand the necessity of the phrase "Obey the Messenger". To make this clear, let us assume that the command in the Quran did not contain the phrase "Obey the messenger" but was only a command to "Obey God". The Jews and the Christians (Nasara) could then say: "But we already obey God! God has sent us the scripture and we obey it". Hence, the Quranic command to "Obey the messenger" endorses the new message (the Quran) which is delivered to all mankind by the messenger Muhammad. The Quran is the final revelation from God to all mankind [Verse 3:138]. The Quran was revealed to mankind and supersedes all previous scripture: "Then We revealed to you this book of guidance, truthfully, confirming previous scriptures and superseding them." [Verse 5:48]. *Contd. after footnote to verse 85:22.*

Sura 81: The Rolling (Al-Takweer)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[81:1] When the sun is rolled.
[81:2] The stars crash into each other.
[81:3] The mountains are wiped out.
[81:4] The reproduction is halted.
[81:5] The beasts are summoned.
[81:6] The oceans are set aflame.

[81:7] The Self are restored to their bodies.
[81:8] The girl who was buried alive is asked:
[81:9] For what crime was she killed?
[81:10] The records are made known.
[81:11] The sky is torn.
[81:12] Hell is ignited.
[81:13] Paradise is presented.
[81:14] Every Self will know everything it brought.

[81:15] I solemnly swear by the planets.
[81:16] Precisely running in their orbits.
[81:17] By the night as it falls.
[81:18] And the morning as it gives fresh breath.
[81:19] This is the utterance of an honourable messenger.
[81:20] Authorised by God, the possessor of all the dominions and fully supported by Him.
[81:21] He shall be obeyed and trusted.
[81:22] Your friend is not foolish or deranged.
[81:23] He saw him at the high horizon.
[81:24] He is not holding back anything.
[81:25] This is not the speech of a dejected egotistic Self.
[81:26] Now then, where will you go?
[81:27] This is a message for all mankind.
[81:28] For those who wish to go straight.
[81:29] Whatever you do is in accordance with the ordinance of God, Sustainer of the universe.

Sura 82: The Shattering (Al-Infitaar)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[82:1] When the heavens are shattered.
[82:2] The planets are scattered.
[82:3] The oceans are exploded.
[82:4] The graves are opened.
[82:5] Every Self will find out what caused it to advance and what caused it to regress.

GOD DESIGNED AND DIRECTED

[82:6] O you human being, what diverted you from your Sustainer, Most Honourable?
[82:7] The One who created you, developed you and perfected you.[1016]
[82:8] In the design He chose, He constructed you.
[82:9] Indeed, you reject this Deen-Islam, the established order.
[82:10] Oblivious to the fact that there are invisible guardians around you.
[82:11] They are honest recorders.
[82:12] They record everything you do.
[82:13] Surely, those who do good deserve peace.
[82:14] While the corrupt and the criminals are committed to hell.
[82:15] They will incur it on the Day of Judgment.
[82:16] They never leave it.
[82:17] Awesome is the conclusion of the established Order.
[82:18] What a day, the Day of Accountability.[1017]
[82:19] That is the day when no Self can help another Self and all decisions, on that day will be concluded according to God's ordinance.

[1016] **God designed the human perfect** and the fabricated doctrines decreed circumcision for men. Traditional Muslims practice circumcision as a religious rite because of doctrines of hadith by As-Shawkani, Abdullah Ibn Jabir, Imam Nawawi and others. It is also, they say, mandatory for converts because it is man's 'fitrah', i.e natural state. If God created man excellent and perfect, how does a circumcised male come to be in a natural state? Circumcision is the only surgery in history ever advocated as a widespread means of preventing disease. When such claims are investigated by medical organizations, they are found lacking. Over 80% of the world's males are not circumcised, and there is no widespread of disease as a result. Though many people associate circumcision with Jews, most circumcised males are Muslims. There are many reasons not to circumcise, for example: a) the foreskin is not a birth defect, God created the male perfect. b) there is no medical reason for 'routine' circumcision for males or females. c) Circumcision does not prevent diseases. d) Personal hygiene should be a daily task and cutting off a piece of foreskin does not necessarily make an individual more hygienic. The Quran only says that man is created excellent and perfect and does not say anything about circumcision being obligatory for men or women. Therefore, unless for medical reasons, circumcision is not necessary. See verses and footnotes 40:64; 95:4. See also verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.

[1017] **Messengers**, the malaika, as invisible recorders, the ultimate in data cloud storage.

Sura 83: The Cheaters (Al-Mutafifeen)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[83:1] Misery to those who deceive.
[83:2] Who demand full measure when receiving something.
[83:3] But when giving anything in measure, they cheat.
[83:4] Do they not know that they will be resurrected?
[83:5] On a tremendous day?
[83:6] That is the day when all people will stand before the Sustainer of the universe.
[83:7] Indeed, the record of the wicked and corrupt is in the Sijjeen.
[83:8] Do you know what the Sijjeen is?
[83:9] It's a structured record most truthful.
[83:10] Misery on that day to the rejecters.
[83:11] They do not believe in the established Order.
[83:12] None disbelieves therein except the transgressor, the corrupt.
[83:13] When Our revelations are recited to him, he says, "These are nothing but tales from the past."
[83:14] Indeed, their hearts have become covered by their crimes.
[83:15] Indeed, they will be isolated on that day from their Sustainer.
[83:16] Then they will be drawn into hell.
[83:17] They will be told, "This is what you used to deny."

[83:18] Indeed, the book of the righteous will be in the Elaiyeen.
[83:19] Do you know what the Elaiyeen is?
[83:20] It's a structured record most truthful.
[83:21] To be witnessed by those close to Me.
[83:22] The righteous have deserved peace.
[83:23] On luxurious furnishings they watch.
[83:24] You recognise in their faces the joy of bliss.
[83:25] Their drinks will be flavoured with nectar.
[83:26] It is pleasurable to drink. This is what the competitors should compete for.
[83:27] Mixed into it will be desirable aromas.
[83:28] From a spring that is reserved for those close to Me.
[83:29] The wicked used to laugh at those who believed.
[83:30] When they passed by them, they used to poke fun.
[83:31] When they got together with their people, they used to joke.
[83:32] Whenever they saw them, they said, "These people are far astray.
[83:33] "They have no such thing as any protectors."
[83:34] Today, those who believed are content at the disbelievers.
[83:35] From luxurious surroundings they watch them.
[83:36] Most assuredly, the disbelievers are punished for what they did.

Sura 84: The Splitting (Al-Inshiqaaq)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[84:1] The time will come when the sky is ruptured.
[84:2] It will hearken to its Sustainer's ordinance and expire.
[84:3] The earth will be levelled.
[84:4] It will eject its contents as it erupts.
[84:5] It will hearken to its Sustainer's ordinance and expire.

[84:6] O mankind, you are irreversibly heading for a meeting with your Sustainer.
[84:7] As for the one who receives his record in his right hand,
[84:8] His reckoning will be easy.
[84:9] He will be with his people joyfully.
[84:10] As for the one who receives his record behind his back,
[84:11] He will be ridden with remorse.
[84:12] And will burn in hell.
[84:13] He used to act arrogantly among his people.
[84:14] He thought that he will never be called to account.
[84:15] Indeed, his Sustainer was the seer of all that he did.

[84:16] I solemnly swear by the glowing dusk.
[84:17] And the night as it spreads.
[84:18] And the moon and its phases.
[84:19] You too evolve from one creation to another.[1018]

[84:20] Why do they not believe?
[84:21] And when the Quran is recited to them, they do not concede.[1019]
[84:22] This is because those who disregard it are in reality the rejecters.
[84:23] God is fully aware of their innermost thoughts.
[84:24] Promise them a painful retribution.
[84:25] As for those who believed and led a righteous life, they receive a recompense that is well-deserved.

[1018] **How did life begin?** See verse and footnote 36:82. **The meaning of life.** See verses and footnotes 3:142; 20:15; 21:111; 90:10-20; 94:5-8. Also see verse and footnote 36:82.
[1019] **The Quran:** literally the Recitation. (Root: Q'R. Derivatives: *quran, qara'a*). When the Quran is recited God's guidance is being revealed, but many insist on rejecting and do not accept it. However this is to their own detriment. See verses and footnote 2:185.

Sura 85: The Constellations (Al-Burooj)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[85:1] By the sky and the galaxies.
[85:2] By the promised day.
[85:3] And the witness and the witnessed.
[85:4] Misery to the people of the canyon.
[85:5] They ignited a blazing fire.
[85:6] Then sat around it.
[85:7] To watch the burning of the believers.
[85:8]They hated them for no other reason than believing in God, the Almighty, the Praiseworthy.
[85:9] To Him belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. And God witnesses all things.
[85:10] Surely, those who persecute the believing men and women, then fail to repent, have incurred the punishment of a hell of their own making. They have incurred a retribution most harrowing.
[85:11] Surely, those who believed and led a righteous life have deserved peace and tranquillity. This is the greatest triumph.
[85:12] Indeed, the grip of your Sustainer is severe.
[85:13] He is the One who initiates and repeats.
[85:14] And He is the Protecting and the Most Kind.
[85:15] Possessor of the glorious domain.
[85:16] The One whose actions are consistent with His ordinance.[1020]
[85:17] Do you know the history of the troops?[1021]
[85:18] Firawn and Thamoud?
[85:19] Those who disbelieve are plagued with denial.
[85:20] God is fully aware of them.
[85:21] Indeed, this is a glorious Quran.
[85:22] In a preserved and protected master tablet.[1022]

[1020] **God's Ordinance:** God's law, will, decree, direction, command. (Mercy: Arabic: *Rahmah.* Beneficent: Arabic *Rahim)* God's actions are determined by His own laws. Of course, God is absolutely free, but God, carries out His will in a disciplined measure. If it implies a restriction on God's power, it is a self-imposed restriction, and as such does not in any way detract from God's omnipotence. As a verse 6:54 puts it, "The One who sustains you has decreed for himself mercy as an attribute." *i.e.* the responsibility of His creations development and growth. It means that mercy flows from God's Self. It is not imposed on Him by any external agency. God is *Rahim* and *Rahmah* because both are essential Divine attributes. We too feel really free when our actions are in full accord with the basic characteristics of our Self. When we impose restrictions on our freedom, it is for the sole purpose of turning it to the best account. These restrictions do not detract from our freedom, nor are they derogatory to our status as free agents. Freedom, properly channelled, is the necessary condition of human development, both individual and social. See verse and footnote 6:54.

[1021] **History:** (Arabic: *hadith*). See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.

Sura 86: The Distinct Star (Al-Tariq)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[86:1] By the sky and Al-Tariq.
[86:2] Do you know what Al-Tariq is?
[86:3] It is a distinct bright star.
[86:4] Absolutely, every Self is well protected.
[86:5] Let the human reflect on his creation.
[86:6] He was created from an ejected liquid
[86:7] that emanates from the male into the female.
[86:8] He is certainly able to resurrect him.
[86:9] The day all secrets become known.
[86:10] He will have no power, nor a helper.
[86:11] By the sky that returns the water to earth.
[86:12] By the earth that splits to grow plants.
[86:13] This is a profound narration.
[86:14] Not to be taken lightly.
[86:15] They plot and scheme.
[86:16] God plans too and God's plans are far better.
[86:17] There is a respite for the rejecters; a short respite.

[1022] **The Quran** is preserved and protected even by people who may not follow it or understand its profoundness. Millions of people around the world, from very young children to adults, memorise the Quran verbatim, without ever understanding the words they recite. They do this in order to 'safeguard' it, or make 'hifz': commit it to memory and afterwards are given the title 'Hafiz'. This means that the Quran is preserved word for word, even if all the printed copies were destroyed, it could be re-produced quickly. **The respite** mentioned in verse 86:17 is an opportunity to accept the guidance. Each Self needs time to repair the damage done and strengthen itself. See footnote to verse 6:12.

Obey God, obey the messenger: *contd. from footnote to verse 80:42.* See also verse 4:42.

2- The duty of the Messenger. You shall obey God and you shall obey the messenger and beware. If you turn away, then know that the *sole duty* of Our messenger is to deliver the message. [See verse 5:92; 64:12] When we look at the above Quranic words, we note that God has defined very clearly that the *only* duty of the messenger is to deliver the message, i.e. the Quran. We also have in the above Quranic verses a very strong link between: **1- Obey the messenger, 2- The sole duty of the messenger was to deliver the message.** Both points *1 and 2 confirm that we must obey the message he delivered.* The word messenger is derived from the word message. A messenger delivers a *message*. If there was no message there would be no messenger. To obey the messenger thus means to obey the message he (the messenger) delivered.

3- Is it obey "Muhammad" or "obey the messenger"? God is most efficient in expressing any meaning. All Quranic words are chosen by God to convey a precise meaning. We never read anywhere in the Quran commands like "Obey God and obey Muhammad" or obey Jesus, or Moses. The words used are always "Obey the messenger". This is to emphasise that it is the message that has to be obeyed. This is especially important as the messenger is no longer here to convey the message**. Who explains the Quran?** It is God who explains. See verses 55:1-2; 75:16-19. **Did Muhammad dictate** a secondary explanations called the 'hadith and sunnah'? 4:42; 17:73; 69:44-52. See also: 68:37. **People should** not disobey the messenger's *righteous* orders, that is if they did not conflict with the Quran. This means there was no blind following of the messenger. See verse 60:12.

Sura 87: The Most High (Al-A'alaa)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[87:1] Glorify the name of your Sustainer, the Most High.
[87:2] He gives measure and proportion.
[87:3] He creates and directs.[1023]
[87:4] He produces the green pasture.
[87:5] Then turns it into light hay.
[87:6] We will recite to you; do not forget.
[87:7] Everything is in accordance with God's ordinance; He knows what is declared and what is hidden.
[87:8] We will guide you towards the straight and balanced path.
[87:9] Therefore, you shall remind; perhaps the reminder will benefit.
[87:10] The reverent will take heed.
[87:11] The wicked will avoid it.
[87:12] Consequently, they will suffer the great fiery torment.
[87:13] Wherein they never die nor stay alive.
[87:14] Successful indeed is the one who redeems his Self.
[87:15] By remembering his duty to his Sustainer and observing his commitments.
[87:16] Indeed, you are preoccupied with this first life.
[87:17] Even though the life yet to come is far better and everlasting.
[87:18] This is also recorded in the earlier teachings.
[87:19] The teachings of Abraham and Moses.

[1023] **In the Quran** God draws attention to man's fantastic surroundings and the wonders within himself. It pushes man to search, discover and know his world, to harness and manage nature for his own benefit and for the benefit of the world at large. To explore by science and reason is at the heart of all discovery and the Quran inspires man to stretch his mind and imagination. There is no fear in God's Deen-Islam that science will expose the deficiencies that religion harbours. The Deen-Islam is what operates the cosmos, the very mechanism that ensures that it works precisely the way it does. Science tells us that if the constancy of the universe was changed by even a fraction we would plunge into chaos forever. It's finely designed and finely tuned. And man too has the remarkable system within himself to know, discover and understand this. We can actually discover the laws that operate the universe. It is not meaningless. If it were we could not understand it. Nonsense cannot be comprehended. Only meaning, order and purpose can be understood. The fact that the world around us functions in a meaningful and purposeful way helps us to study and understand it. That alone should awaken us to God's call to look around ourselves and endeavour to realise our potential and thus fulfilling the purpose for which we have been created. See verses: 6:6; 7:185; 9:70; 16:48; 26:7-8; 27:86; 29:19-20; 29:67; 30:9; 39:45; 35:44; 36:71; 40:82; 50:6-8; 67:19. See also verses 13:11; 41:53 & 11:7; 16:69; 24:41; 20:53; 21:33; 31:29; 33:34; 36:40; 53:46; 53:49.

Sura 88: The Overwhelming (Al-Ghashiyah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[88:1] Are you aware of the event that is overwhelming?[1024]
[88:2] Faces on that day will be shamed.
[88:3] Toiling and exhausted.
[88:4] Suffering in a blazing hellfire.
[88:5] Drinking from a boiling spring.
[88:6] They will have no food except the useless variety.
[88:7] It never nourishes nor satisfies hunger.

[88:8] Other faces on that day will be full of joy.
[88:9] Satisfied with their work.
[88:10] In an exalted place of peace and security.
[88:11] In it, no nonsense is heard.
[88:12] In it, a fresh cool spring flows.
[88:13] In it, there are luxurious furnishings.
[88:14] And pleasurable drinks made available.
[88:15] Contained in rows of pitchers.
[88:16] And a carpet of a soft substance throughout.

[88:17] Why do they not reflect on the animals and how they are created?
[88:18] And the sky and how it is raised.
[88:19] And the mountains and how they are constructed.
[88:20] And the earth and how it is built.
[88:21] You shall remind, for your mission is to deliver this reminder.
[88:22] You have no power over them.
[88:23] As for those who turn away and disbelieve.
[88:24] God will commit them to the great retribution.
[88:25] To Us is their ultimate return.
[88:26] Then We will call them to account.

[1024] **Event:** (Arabic: *hadith*). See verses and footnotes 4:42; 68:37.

Sura 89: The Dawn (Al-Fajr)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[89:1] By the dawn.
[89:2] And the ten nights.
[89:3] By the even and the odd.
[89:4] By the night as it passes.
[89:5] A profound oath, for the one who possesses intelligence.
[89:6] Have you noted what your Sustainer did to Aad?
[89:7] Eram: the town with tall buildings.
[89:8] There was nothing like it anywhere.
[89:9] Also Thamoud's people who carved the rocks in their valley.
[89:10] And Firawn who possessed might.
[89:11] They all transgressed in the land.
[89:12] They spread corruption throughout.
[89:13] Consequently, your Sustainer punished them.
[89:14] Your Sustainer is Ever-watchful.

[89:15] When the human being is tested by his Sustainer, through blessings and joy, he says, "My Sustainer is generous towards me."
[89:16] But if He tests him through reduction in provisions, he says, "My Sustainer is humiliating me."
[89:17] What a debased view. It is you who brought it on yourselves by not regarding the orphan.
[89:18] And not encouraging any spending for the poor.
[89:19] And consuming the inheritance of helpless orphans.
[89:20] And loving money too much.
[89:21] Indeed, when the earth is crushed, utterly crushed.
[89:22] And your Sustainer comes, together with the malaika, in row after row.
[89:23] On that day, a hell of their own making will surround them. On that day, the human being will remember but what a remembrance. It will be too late.
[89:24] He will say, "Oh, I wish I prepared for my eternal life."
[89:25] On that day, no punishment could be worse than His retribution.
[89:26] And no incarceration is as effective as His confinement.

[89:27] As for you, the contented Self.
[89:28] Return to your Sustainer, pleased and with approval.
[89:29] Welcome to My servants.
[89:30] Welcome into My peace and security.

Sura 90: The Town (Al-Balad)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[90:1] I solemnly swear by this town.
[90:2] The town where you live and,
[90:3] the one who procreates and the one that is born.
[90:4] We created the human being to realise a latent potential through development.[1025]
[90:5] Does he think that no one will ever call him to account?
[90:6] He boasts, "I spent so much money."
[90:7] Does he think that no one sees him?
[90:8] Did We not give him two eyes?
[90:9] A tongue and two lips?
[90:10] Did We not show him the two paths?
[90:11] He should choose the more testing path.[1026]
[90:12] Which one is the more testing path?
[90:13] The freeing of captives and slaves,
[90:14] feeding the poor, especially during times of hardship.
[90:15] Justice to the related orphans,
[90:16] or the poor who are in need,
[90:17] and being one of those who believe and exhorting one another to be steadfast and exhorting one another to be kind.
[90:18] These have deserved happiness.
[90:19] As for those who disbelieve in Our guidance, they incur misery.
[90:20] They will be confined in a fiery hell of their own making.

[1025] **For every individual,** no doubt in this life the odds are set against you. But the obstacles are there not to frustrate you but to bring out the best in you. They are designed to put you on your mettle and permit the indomitable Self you possess to reveal itself in all its glory. You develop yourself in the course of overcoming obstacles. Frustration will force you to reconstruct your personality. Rebuffs and set-backs toughen and harden you and by facing challenges you develop a mature personality. So even at times when the world appears to be stern and unkind, in the long run it turns out to be not your enemy but your friend. Development is a journey, not a destination. See verses 29:6; 36:81; 67:2; 73:20; 75:40; 94:4-8. See also 84:19.

[1026] **Choice is paramount** in personal development: predestination or fatalism has no place in Deen-Islam. This verse encourages people to go in the direction that stretches their potential and produces positive results, not for the short term gain but for lasting benefits. The road less travelled is the more testing path and only for those who have the willpower, the strength of the Self to take the challenge.

Sura 91: The Sun (Al-Shams)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[91:1] By the sun and its brightness.
[91:2] The moon that orbits it.[1027]
[91:3] The day that reveals with its light.
[91:4] The night that covers with its darkness.
[91:5] The sky and Him who constructed it.
[91:6] The earth and Him who sustains it.
[91:7] The Self and Him who created it.[1028]
[91:8] Then revealed to it evil and how to safeguard from it.
[91:9] Successful is one who purifies his Self.
[91:10] Failing is one who neglects and diminishes his Self.
[91:11] Thamoud's disbelief caused them to transgress.
[91:12] They followed the corrupt among them.
[91:13] God's messenger said to them, "This is God's camel; as a discipline, let her drink."
[91:14] They disbelieved him and slaughtered her. Their Sustainer then punished them for their crime and annihilated them.[1029]
[91:15] Yet, those who came after them remain heedless.

[1027] **The moon** orbits the earth and the earth orbits the sun, together the earth and the moon orbit the sun. In the bigger picture our whole planetary system orbits and is constantly moving.

[1028] **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*). Verses 91:7-9. Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. See verse 2:43 and footnote.

[1029] **It may** seem harsh that killing a camel due to lack of discipline can lead to God's retribution, but we don't know the true reasoning behind this decree. However, even in modern times many species are protected and cannot be killed or captured. Killing any of the protected animals, birds or their eggs can result in prosecution and conviction of a serious offence that could mean imprisonment or at the least a criminal record. In Africa, armed rangers patrol reservations to stop poaching, any ensuing battle to protect the animals can mean death for poachers or rangers alike. See verses and footnotes 7:73-79; 11:64; 17:59-60; 26:155; 54:27-32.

Sura 92: The Night (Al-Layl)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[92:1] By the night as it shrouds.
[92:2] The day and its resplendence.
[92:3] And Him who created the male and the female.
[92:4] Your works are of various kinds.
[92:5] He who spends for the good of others and keeps his duty to Him,
[92:6] and upholds this guidance.
[92:7] We will direct him towards a destination of a good life.
[92:8] But he who is miserly, though he is wealthy.
[92:9] And rejects this guidance.
[92:10] We will direct him towards misery.
[92:11] His money cannot help him when he falls.
[92:12] We provide this guidance.
[92:13] We determine the end as well as the duration of this life.
[92:14] We have warned you about the blazing hellfire.
[92:15]None burns therein except the wrongdoer, the wicked and the corrupt.
[92:16] Who rejects this guidance and turns away.
[92:17] The righteous will be spared the anxiety and pain.
[92:18] They are those who purified themselves.
[92:19] Seeking nothing in return.
[92:20] Seeking only to fulfil their duty to their Sustainer, the Most High.
[92:21] They will certainly attain salvation.[1030]

Sura 93: The Forenoon (Al-Duhaa)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[93:1] By the forenoon.
[93:2] By the night as it falls.
[93:3] Your Sustainer never abandoned you, nor did He forget you.
[93:4] The life yet to come is far better for you than this first life.
[93:5] And your Sustainer will give you enough. You will be pleased.
[93:6] Did He not find you orphaned and He gave you a home?
[93:7] He found you astray and guided you.
[93:8] He found you poor and made you rich.
[93:9] Therefore, you shall not forsake the orphan.
[93:10] Nor shall you reprimand the destitute.
[93:11] You shall proclaim the blessing your Sustainer has bestowed upon you.

[1030] **Salvation and guidance:** See verses and footnotes 2:183; 11:51; 57:10; 73:20. and 40:66.

Sura 94: The Cooling (Al-Sharrh)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[94:1] Did We not cool your temper?
[94:2] And We unloaded the burden when you erred.[1031]
[94:3] One that weighed down your back.
[94:4] We exalted you to an honourable position.
[94:5] With hardship there is expansion of the Self.[1032]
[94:6] Indeed, with adversity there is growth of character.
[94:7] Whenever possible you shall strive.
[94:8] Seeking only to do your duty to your Sustainer.

Sura 95: The Fig (Al-Teen)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[95:1] By the fig and the olive and
[95:2] Mount Sinai.
[95:3] And this honoured town.
[95:4] We created man in the best design.[1033]
[95:5] Then turned him into something humble and modest.
[95:6] Except those who believe and lead a righteous life; they receive a reward that is well-deserved.
[95:7] Why do you still reject this Deen-Islam?
[95:8] Is God not the best above all the judges?

[1031] **While his character** was praiseworthy, the messenger needed guidance in respect of Deen-Islam. Undoubtedly as a human being the messenger made mistakes but God's guidance ensured they were rectified. See verses and footnotes 33:37; 40:66; 48:2; 66:1-4; 80:1; 93:7.

[1032] **The society** that is civilised, cultured and united is the *Ummah* of the Quran as referred to in verse 3:103 and also mentioned in the verse 2:143: "We thus made you a justly balance community (Arabic: *Ummah).* This is the reason for the Quran's emphasis on communal life and for its disapproval of monasticism. Goethe once remarked that character is formed not in solitude, but in the hurly-burly of life. The self shrinks and contracts in solitude, while it grows and expands through active and continuous participation in social activities. A harmonious, well-knit and integrated personality can take shape only in a balanced and concordant society. The human mind is the arena of conflicting desires. Society too carries the seed of discord as it is composed of individuals with different and often opposed tastes, interests and aims. In society the resulting conflicts should not be resolved by suppressing one party and giving free rein to the other. The true solution lies in mutual adjustment, in reconciling one to the other and in discovering an activity or a way of life which affords reasonable satisfaction to rivals. Balance and proportion should characterise personality as well as society. How can human personality acquire proportion? The answer is that it can do so only by taking as its model the Divine Attributes which underpin the Quranic Permanent Values. See verses and footnotes 57:27; 112:1-4 and verses 47:38; 65:11 and verse 90:4.

[1033] **The human being** is created excellent. See verse and footnote 40:64.

Sura 96: The Embryo (Al-Alaq)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[96:1] Read, in the name of your Sustainer, who created.[1034]
[96:2] He created man from a congealed mass that clings.
[96:3] Read and your Sustainer, Most Exalted,
[96:4] Teaches by means of a pen.
[96:5] He teaches man what he never knew.
[96:6] Indeed, the human transgresses,
[96:7] When he becomes rich.
[96:8] To your Sustainer is the ultimate return.
[96:9] Have you seen the one who prevents
[96:10] Others from fulfilling their commitments?
[96:11] Is it not better to follow this guidance than him,
[96:12] and safeguard righteousness?
[96:13] If he rejects this guidance and turns away.
[96:14] Does he not realise that God sees?
[96:15] Indeed, unless he refrains, We will take him by the forelock.
[96:16] A forelock that is disbelieving and corrupt.
[96:17] Let him then call on his helpers.
[96:18] We will call for him the guardians of hell.
[96:19] You shall not follow him; you shall submit and draw nearer to righteousness.

[1034] **This is considered** to be the first Sura revealed and significantly it begins with the command to 'READ'. This is an explicit instruction to gain knowledge through education by the medium of *writing (pen) and reading*. This command applies to everyone, including women, whose position as wives and mothers makes their education of vital importance. Learning the Quran, not just by memorisation, but with understanding is the responsibility of all people - how else can we follow God's guidance if we don't understand it? It is crucial for everyone to know the Absolute Laws and Permanent Values in the Quran, otherwise the charlatan priest, pretending to convey the will of God, can fool people and lead them to believe something else. Those who set themselves up as the 'guardians of faith', strengthen their foothold and maintain an effective grip by keeping people ignorant, crippling their reason, and rendering them incapable of independent thinking, and holding up ignorance, stupidity and blind submission as signs of piety and godliness. With masses of people ignorant, they can achieve their ambitions unhindered. Therefore it is the duty of all people to learn and understand the Quran, as well as learning sciences, literature, history and all other useful things and to encourage others to do the same. Knowledge alone is not power: the *use* of knowledge is power. See verses 6:51; 9:122; 58:11.

Sura 97: The Destiny (Al-Qadr)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[97:1] We revealed this guidance in the Night of Destiny.[1035]
[97:2] How tremendous is the Night of Destiny.
[97:3] The Night of Qadr is better than a thousand months.
[97:4] The malaika and the energy are directed by their Sustainer's command to carry out every decree.
[97:5] Peaceful it is until the advent of that dawn.

Sura 98: The Clear Proof (Al-Bayyinah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[98:1] Those who rejected this guidance from among the people of the previous scripture, as well as the mushrikeen, insist on their ways, despite the clear signs given to them.[1036]
[98:2] A messenger from God is reciting to them a sacred guidance.
[98:3] In this there are valuable teachings.
[98:4] Indeed, those who received the previous scripture did not become divided until the guidance was given to them.
[98:5] All that was asked of them was to serve God, keeping His Deen-Islam, and serve Him alone, observe their commitments and keep them pure. Such is the perfect Deen: the established Order.
[98:6] Those who reject this guidance from among the people of the scripture and those who set up authorities to rank with God have incurred a hellish torment forever. They are the worst creatures in the sight of God.
[98:7] Those who believed and led a righteous life are the most excellent beings.
[98:8] Their reward at their Sustainer is the state of peace and security, wherein they abide forever. God's approval encompasses them and they are pleased with Him. Such is the reward for those who keep their duty to their Sustainer.

[1035] **Destiny:** (Arabic: *qadr*. Derivative: *taqdir*). To have a determined and objective conclusion. Destiny in this aspect means the final outcome of a particular event or situation with an end determined by absolute law. For example you could say that an apple seed is destined to become an apple. It could never become a pear or a banana, and it could not in itself change this result. However, an individual's end is not so determined, no person is destined for heaven or hell, only their actions decide the consequences. All actions have determined outcomes and these can be said to be *taqdir*: destiny. A person is free to make choices but, once the choice is made, is not free from the consequences of that choice and that becomes the determined destiny of the individual.

[1036] **Mushrikeen** are those who commit shirk: treachery, that is people who accept laws and doctrine from other than God. See verses and footnotes 2:105; 6:114; 9:3-12 and verse 68:37.

Sura 99: The Quake (Al-Zalzalah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[99:1] When the earth quakes with a final tremor.
[99:2] And the earth ejects its loads.
[99:3] The human will wonder: "What is happening?"
[99:4] On that day, it will be self-evident
[99:5] that your Sustainer has ordained it.
[99:6] On that day, people will issue from every direction, to be shown their works.
[99:7] Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it.
[99:8] And whoever does an atom's weight of wrong will see it.

Sura 100: The Runners (Al-Aadiyaat)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[100:1] By the speedy runners.
[100:2] Igniting sparks.
[100:3] Invading by morning.
[100:4] Striking terror therein.
[100:5] Penetrating into the heart of their territory.
[100:6] The human being is unappreciative of his Sustainer.
[100:7] He bears witness to this fact.
[100:8] He loves material things excessively.
[100:9] Does he not realise that the day will come when the graves are opened?
[100:10] And all secrets are brought out.
[100:11] They will find out on that day that their Sustainer has been fully aware of them.

Sura 101: The Calamity (Al-Qaare`ah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[101:1] The Calamity.
[101:2] What is the day of Calamity?
[101:3] Indeed you will find out what the Calamity is.
[101:4] That is the day when all the people come out of their graves like swarms of moths.
[101:5] The mountains will be like fluffy wool.
[101:6] As for him whose good deeds weigh heavy,
[101:7] He will lead a happy eternal life.
[101:8] As for him who is undeveloped and weights are light.
[101:9] His end is a lowly conclusion.
[101:10] Do you know what it is?
[101:11] A fiery hell of his own making.

Sura 102: The Hoarding (Al-Takaathur)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[102:1] You remain preoccupied with hoarding.
[102:2] Until you go to the graves.
[102:3] Indeed, you will find out.
[102:4] Most assuredly, you will find out.
[102:5] If only you could find out for certain, just now.
[102:6] You would envision hell.
[102:7] Then you would see it with the eye of certainty.
[102:8] You will be questioned on that awesome day about the blessings you had enjoyed.

Sura 103: The Afternoon (Al-Asr)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[103:1] By the token of the afternoon.
[103:2] The human being is in total loss.
[103:3] Except those who believe in this guidance and lead a righteous life and exhort one another to uphold the truth and exhort one another to be steadfast.

Sura 104: The Backbiter (Al-Humazah)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[104:1] Misery to every backbiter, slanderer.
[104:2] He hoards money and property for accumulation's sake.
[104:3] As if his wealth will make him immortal.
[104:4] Never will it save him. He will be drawn into the doom.
[104:5] Do you know what the doom is?
[104:6] God's blazing hellfire that attracts the corrupt.
[104:7] It burns them inside out.
[104:8] They will be confined therein.
[104:9] In extended queues.

Sura 105: The Elephant (Al-Feel)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[105:1] Have you noted what your Sustainer did to the people of the elephant?
[105:2] Did He not cause their schemes to backfire?
[105:3] He sent upon them swarms of birds.
[105:4] That showered them with hard stones.
[105:5] He made them like chewed up hay.

Sura 106: The Quraish (Quraish)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[106:1] This guidance should have been cherished by the Quraish.
[106:2] The way they cherished the coming of the trade caravans of the winter and the summer.
[106:3] They should have served the Sustainer of the System.
[106:4] For He is the One who fed them after hunger and provided them with security after fear.

Sura 107: The Relief (Al-Maa'oun)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[107:1] Do you know the signs of the one who really rejects this Deen-Islam; the decreed social order of God?
[107:2] It is the one who mistreats the orphans.
[107:3] And does not advocate the feeding and helping of the needy.
[107:4] And misery to those who feign to uphold their commitments,[1037]
[107:5] while in reality they are totally heedless of fulfilling them.
[107:6] They do things only to show off.
[107:7] And they are averse to doing anything good.

Sura 108: The Bounty (Al-Kauthar)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[108:1] We have blessed you with many a bounty.
[108:2] Therefore, you shall fulfil your obligations to your Sustainer.
[108:3] Your opponent will be the loser.

Sura 109: The Rejecters (Al-Kafiroon)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[109:1] Say: "O you who reject this guidance.
[109:2] I do not serve those whom you serve.
[109:3] Nor do you serve the One God that I serve.
[109:4] Nor will I ever serve those whom you serve.
[109:5] Nor will you ever serve the One God that I serve.
[109:6] To you is your deen and way of life, and for me is my Deen; that is my way of life."[1038]

[1037] **Commitments:** (Arabic: *solaa*) are important obligations that exalt our character when we fulfil them. However, some pretend to keep their commitments while in reality they have other less sincere motives. **Committed** (Arabic: *muSollan sing. muSollin pl.* Root S'L'W). See also verses and footnotes 2:3 & 2:125.

[1038] **Rejecter/disbeliever:** (Arabic: *kafir.* Derivatives *kufr, kafiroon* pl.) The word *kafir* and its derivatives appear 135 times and like many words in the Quran has many facets to it. The Arabic word *kafir* has simply been translated as 'disbeliever', but it really means much more than that. It means disbeliever or rejecter. The underlying meaning is one who covers the truth. The *kaffir* is a person who openly rejects, denies or conceals the truth, in this case the truth of this guidance. The translated words still do not do justice to the original Arabic - because it does not convey what the *kafir* really rejects or disbelieves. So what does he actually reject? This rejection includes but is not limited to, the truth, justice, sincerity and the helping of the vulnerable. He rejects the Permanent Values and Absolute laws that progress individuals and societies. And most importantly he rejects

Sura 110: The Triumph (Al-Naasr)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[110:1] When triumph comes from God and with it comes victory.
[110:2] You will see people embracing God's Deen-Islam in multitudes.
[110:3] You shall glorify and honour your Sustainer and implore Him for protection. He is the Redeemer.

Sura 111: The Thorns (Al-Masad)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[111:1] Condemned are the works of Abu Lahab and he too is damned.[1039]
[111:2] His money and whatever he has accomplished will never help him.
[111:3] He has incurred a state of blazing hell.
[111:4] Also his wife who led the persecution.
[111:5] She will be resurrected with a rope of palm-fibre around her neck.

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accountability to his Self and ultimately to God. An individual who openly refuses to accept the things that develop the human personality and rejects the Quran as the guidance to protect his or her Self from lasting harm, is a *kafir*. Furthermore, the rejection is in fact the refusal to accept values that advance society, the values that God decrees in the Quran. For example to fulfil one's commitments with sincerity, to advocate good and stop evil, strive against oppression and injustice, to promote fair trade and social welfare, to honour parents and to stop the killing of children and also the ultimate accountability to God. These are just some of the values found in the Quran that, when applied, eradicate social ills in communities. It is these Permanent Values and Absolute Laws that move forward the procession of life, to develop society and one's Self and make it fit for the life yet to come. It is these values and laws the *kafir*, the disbeliever, rejects.

[1039] **Abu Lahab** was the messenger's uncle and the leader of those who opposed him. His wife carried out a campaign of persecution against the messenger and the believers. **Rope of palm-fibre:** Like all descriptions of heaven and hell, the rope of palm-fibre is an allegory.

Sura 112: Absoluteness (Al-Ikhlaas)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[112:1] Proclaim: "He is the One and only God.
[112:2] God, the Absolute.
[112:3] He does not beget. Nor was He begotten.
[112:4] And there is none comparable with Him."[1040]

[1040] **This Sura** gives the definition of God and His essential attributes. We should bear in mind that these attributes belong only to God as the Absolute Self, but by virtue of possessing a Self, man too can acquire them within human limits; so to some extent the saying that *'God created man in His own image'* is true. It should be emphasised however, that **the Divine attributes,** mentioned in the Quran, are such that they can belong *only* to God. **The first verse** of this Sura emphasizes the attributes of *ahadiyyah* or Oneness. "Proclaim: He is the One and only God." The word *"One" (ahad)* connotes unity, uniqueness and wholeness. It implies self-identity, self-consistency and integrity. Nothing from outside can secure a lodgement in it. Its unity is not paralleled anywhere in the universe. Of course, only a strong personality possesses unity of this kind. A weak personality with its ever-changing attitudes cannot lay claim to such oneness. **The second verse** refers to the Divine attribute of *samadiyyah* or self-dependence. The term signifies independence, self-reliance and self-sufficiency. *Samad* is the being which depends only on its own Self and on nothing else, a being which is eternally enduring and absolutely free. **The third verse,** "He does not beget. Nor was He begotten." refers to another important Divine attribute. God, as the Absolute Self, is self-subsistent. God, the ultimate Self did not come into being through the natural process of procreation and neither does He procreate, that is why he does not have a son, partner, inheritor or indeed any to rank with Him. **The fourth and last verse,** "There is none comparable with Him," refers to another Divine attribute. God is unique: He is not like anything we have seen or known and there is none comparable to Him. Therefore to think that man who can barely understand the world he lives in can encompass God, the One who sustains the heavens and the earth, is a delusion of great magnitude. For a disbeliever, the one who rejects such a being, to say that he can know beyond a shadow of doubt that no such God exists, is an act of immeasurable arrogance. **An important point** to note is that the words *ahad, ahadiyya, wahid and tawhid* (Root: A'H'D) all have the same essence of meaning (oneness, unity) as they all stem from the same root. Some people, unaware of the structure, of Arabic words say that *'tawhid'* and *'wahid'* have different roots, but this is not possible unless the rules are ignored or neglected. The concept of *tawhid* (oneness) is critical and runs throughout the message in the Quran. Therefore to assign a spouse, son, sons or daughters to Him is against a fundamental principle of Quranic teaching about God, and neither is it logical. To believe, accept and concede to any other authority (messengers, priests, leaders, doctrines, decrees, laws etc.) as equal to God (or the Quran, His revealed guidance) is shirk, high treason. God has no equal and to assign a share of His sovereignty to anyone else is to go against the very essence of God's being as supreme and omnipotent over and above everything He has created. **Trinity:** The concept of the Christian Trinity states that the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit are DIFFERENT persons yet the SAME god. But, logically, three things cannot be different and yet the same since different literally means NOT THE SAME, and the word same means NOT DIFFERENT. This doctrine is confusing, to say the least, and a conflict that cannot be resolved. Strangely enough, Christian Trinitarians believe they are monotheists despite the obvious contradiction. While it is possible for the One God to possess multiple attributes, it is not possible for the One God to be anything or anyone other than Himself, and accepting that there is only the One God, negates the claim that He is SOMEONE or OTHER than Himself. God can have different aspects, but each aspect is not a god and cannot be a sovereign entity by itself, otherwise the sovereignty is thus divided, or shared,

Sura 113: Daybreak (Al-Falaq)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[113:1] Say: "I seek refuge in the One who sustains each daybreak.
[113:2] From the evil consequences from among His creations.
[113:3] From the evil carried out in the darkness as it falls.
[113:4] From the evil conspiracies of the troublemakers.
[113:5] From the evil deeds of the envious when they envy."[1041]

Sura 114: People (Al-Naas)

In the name of God, Most Merciful, Most Beneficent

[114:1] Say: "I seek refuge in the One who sustains mankind,
[114:2] The Sovereign authority over all the people,
[114:3] The One God of the people.
[114:4] And from the evils of sneaky whisperers.
[114:5] Who influence the hearts and minds of people.
[114:6] Be they of the hidden kind or the obvious kind."

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which then becomes a situation too bizarre to contemplate. Why would God *need* or indeed *want* this? The belief that God can do anything is also questionable, but it is true to say that God has power *over* all things. The doctrine of the trinity, sacrificial killing of a son, the need for a saviour are all diversions from the real meaning of why we are here. People will move up to a higher plane of existence by the measure of their endeavour, not by pity and grace through a self-sacrificing god-saviour in the guise of a man, but with dignity and honour which they have earned by the goodness of their deeds. See verses and footnotes: 17:42; 21:22; 21:9-100; 23:91. **Life:** see verses and footnotes 3:142; 23:115; 40:11; 51:56; 67:2; 90:4; 94:1-8. **Trinity:** see verse and footnote 4:171.

[1041] **If a person** ate or drank something poisonous either deliberately or unknowingly the body will react to show what has happened. Depending on the substance the response could be immediate and fatal, or it can take some time and may not have any long-term effect. Likewise the mind and the Self is affected by external influences (explicit or subliminal) but there is no physical mechanism to prevent such effects. Each individual needs to put in place their own mental and psychological defences. The Quran provides the guidance to ward off such detrimental pressures by strengthening the Self to prevent any lasting harm from the regressive consequences of the things that happen in this life. See verses and footnotes 8:25; 41:28.

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words generally mistranslated. Correct meanings in brackets: ***sadaqat*** (truth/ sincerity), ***zakaa*** (pure) and ***solaa*** (commitments) - all three appear in verse 58:13. ***hajj*** (challenge/ confront) and jadal (argue/ dispute), both appear in verse 2:197. ***bayta*** (system/ order) and buyat (home), both appear in verse 33:33. ***afu*** (pardon/ forgive) and ghafur (protect), both appear in verse 58:2. ***nabi*** (envoy) and rasul (messenger) both appear in verses 7:157; 22:53. See footnotes to relevant verses. ***daraba*** (set forth/ cite) 2:60; 13:17; 14:24-25; 24:35; 30:28; 47:27; 66:10; 73:20. See also system.

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THE QURANIC CONCEPTS

Tough world?
In reality it's your friend...

No doubt in this life the odds are set against you.
But the obstacles are there not to frustrate you but
to bring out the best in you.

They are designed to put you on your mettle
and permit the indomitable spirit you possess
to reveal itself in all its glory.

You develop yourself in the course
of overcoming obstacles.

Frustration will force you to reconstruct your personality.
Rebuffs and set-backs toughen and harden you, and
by facing challenges you develop a mature personality.

So even at times when the world appears to be stern
and unkind, in the long run it turns out to be,
not your enemy, but your friend.

Development is a journey, not a destination.

Adapted from Islam: A challenge to religion
by G. A. Parwez

THE QURANIC CONCEPTS

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VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF DEEN-ISLAM

Unlike religions enshrined in rituals and rites, the Deen-Islam is based on Absolute Laws and Permanent Values, and like any other system, the benefits and progress can be measured. This can be seen when fear and turmoil is replaced with peace and security resulting in not only the progress and welfare of society but also development of the Self. The ability to raise the status of the Self by human endeavour is of critical importance because it makes the Self fit for the life yet to come. Muslims understand this and apply the Quranic values. The following is not an exhaustive list but serves to illustrate some important aspects of Deen-Islam that every society needs in order to move forward.

- **Accountability to God.** This principle underpins everything. Disbelief in this means that we hold our own opinion, or that of someone else over and above that of God. Since one person's opinion is equal to that of another, then the individual with the most power can and will enforce his or her own opinion. In this case might is right. True justice and equity can only be achieved with external guidance, which we have in the Quran. There is no book in the world, other than the Quran, that gives a holistic set of laws and values: The Permanent Values and Absolute Laws.

- The law of Requital: accountability and accepting responsibility for your own actions.
- Management of the world's resources.
- Spend from the things you love and be benefactors of society.
- Help maintain a Social Welfare Programme for the benefit of all citizens.
- Observe all commitments to yourself, family, relatives, neighbours and the community.
- Keep promises that are made.
- Persevere in times of hardship and adversity.
- Do not bear false witness.
- Honour and be dutiful to parents.
- Restrain anger and refrain from aggression.
- Do not profiteer, engage in bribery or exploitation.
- Do not devour the property of orphans and protect orphans.
- Do not consume one another's wealth unjustly.
- Do not mix the truth with falsehood.
- Judge with justice between people.
- Advocate good and prohibit the bad.
- Punish criminals justly - take responsibility for your own actions.
- Trade equitably, the right goods for the right price.
- Maintain a Social Welfare system for all citizens.
- Maintain equality and tolerance - but not peace at any price.
- Wage war against the corrupt and the criminal who create fear and turmoil.

These are just some of the values the Quran decrees for people to believe and implement to create communities and societies for a life of peace and security.

IN THE BEGINNING...

Eat generously, as you please, but do not divide as the branches
like this tree creating a schism, lest you transgress and harm yourself.
[Verse 2:25]

Religious leaders and their followers are forever proclaiming that they have *faith* in their religion, and only by having *faith* can you achieve salvation. Since *faith* is belief without proof, it's an odd way of securing a good result. If you can accept one doctrine without reasonable evidence, then why not another? Religions of all descriptions have a starting point; when their founder first became enlightened or started preaching his ideas about how best to be saved from the blight in this world to gain bliss in the next: prayer, pilgrimage, miracles, self-flagellation, asceticism, atonement and mercy being the main routes to heaven. What happens to the fate of those before their particular religion took off is anybody's guess. In the case of converts, how do they decide which religion, or indeed which sect they should join? Is it a choice between who has the best ritual or the best festivals?

The world is a place of plenty, enough for the needs of everyone. The differences arise when greed sets in and conflicting interests appear. Common values that ensure people look after each other's interests are instead trampled on in the rush to pick each other's pockets. Why should they do otherwise?

The Quran says that people develop by the measure of their endeavour - not by the practice of rites and rituals. However, this can only take place within a community, and a group of people can only be a community when they share values and goals. People with conflicting interests can never be a community, even if they live in the same place. For mankind, there is no other book that provides better guidance than the Quran.

The Deen-Islam, was not discovered by any founder but the principles that it advocates have always existed, the Absolute Laws and Permanent Values that each and every individual needs: values that are common to progress *all* humanity. Belief in God is simply belief in accountability to your Self, to your community and ultimately to God. This diminishes the need for different conflicting and competing religions and clearly shows that only *one* single social system with the optimal values is required. With accountability, the need to do good becomes imperative, and the desire to pick your fellow human's pocket less attractive.

These days groups like the humanists promote their tenets as if they had discovered them this morning in a eureka moment. Their efforts are to be commended, but they would do well to also study the Quran, then they will

have something much more insightful than just 'good ideas', something all-encompassing, complete, with substance and enduring value.

Leaving aside its inimitable style and structure, the Quran is a book of immense magnitude. Not only does it put human beings and all living things at the centre of moral outlook, it makes these things the very fabric of society. Individuals, communities and the world are the focus of its attention to progress and in life prosper, and it encourages all men and women to develop their Self by facing the challenges that are the inevitable hurdles in this world.

The Quran draws attention to man's fantastic surroundings and the wonders within himself. It pushes man to search, discover and know his world, to harness and manage nature for his own benefit, and for the benefit of the world at large. To explore by science and reason is at the heart of all discovery and the Quran inspires man to stretch his mind and imagination.

Championing human rights is a duty, the Quran proclaims, even to the point of risking your life, because dying for a true and just cause is the ultimate sacrifice any being can make. Indeed all who are fit and able are not exempt from striving with their money *and* their lives. Promoting, flourishing and giving life to the natural environment and human system is an act of great virtue, the Quran stresses, time and time again.

But a good deed or any act of virtue is of no value if its worth is not realised, that is why the Quran underpins all activity with accountability. And this is what puts the Quran's Permanent Values and Absolute Laws over and above any other.

Only a few points have been alluded to here, but the Quran goes much deeper and wider than anything else the Humanist, the Religionist, or any human dares or has the ability to address. As it answers life's questions, it puts the kind of responsibility only a strong personality can undertake. And all this more than a thousand years before any modern day humanist was even born, with values that have been there since man first became aware of his conscience and recognised his ability to distinguish a good action from a bad one.

The Quran is the only book that is the complete moral and ethical code for all mankind and now influences more than one and a half billion people. The sad underlying fact being that while reading this profound book, they too barely understand its true value and the real impact it can have when properly applied.

THE QURAN & MUHAMMAD

The Quran - God's message to all mankind, is complete and detailed and does not need any outside source to explain it. It is a book that is genuinely unique. Even if at first it is perceived to be a 'religious' scripture, on careful study it reveals itself not as a religious doctrine but a work of tremendous insight into the meaning of life and how to develop one's Self.

The author guarantees that it will be preserved, so He made the words simple and weave into each other, the sentences seamlessly merge from one to the next, short and easy to remember. Thus its preservation is ensured for all times just as guaranteed: *"We have revealed this consummate reminder and absolutely We will safeguard it."* [Verse 15:9].

Also the composition of the Quran is sound and consistent; the self-reference is the 'self-checking' mechanism that is intrinsically woven into the Quran. To change the order of words in one place would cause the pattern, the Self-reference structure, to collapse. This alone shows that the book is a work of great magnitude. Who but the One who created all things could produce such a mathematically precise book without the aid of a computer, centuries before such equipment was even conceived? Furthermore, the Quran is practical at many levels. The information about our natural environment is accurate yet presented in a simple way that even the early readers understood it. Now those with advanced scientific knowledge can appreciate it even more. So confident is the author that this book is inimitable that He places a challenge before all those who doubt its source: [Verses 4:82; 17:88]. If it were from other than God, there would have been many contradictions in it and this confirms that no one can produce anything like it.

The holistic social order ordained by God was completed with the conclusion of the revelation of the Quran. In his wisdom God did not want to give any further information, decrees or laws etc. In sura 5:3 it says :

"...This day, I have completed your Deen, the Established Order, perfected My blessing upon you and I have decreed for you harmony in the System of this Deen-Islam..."

It is perfect, detailed and the only source of guidance for those who want to protect themselves from permanent harm.

The Quran is the complete and final law but others want to seize the right that belongs to God alone, even claiming that the Quran does not give details and it needs to be explained. For the sincere reader the Quran has sufficient details as guidance in all things for this life, and the explanations become clear by reading.

"It is God who compiled the Quran and it is He who will explain it. " [Verse 75:16-19].

The Quran is good news for those who want to promote the welfare and progress of society and it is a warning for the corrupt: those who seek to exploit society and further their own aims for power and financial gain. This is why Muhammad was often pressured to invent verses to suit the greed of these criminals, and had he complied with their wishes they would have considered him as a friend, but then God would have punished Muhammad severely. [Verses 7:203; 17:73; 69:38-52]. Had God not strengthened Muhammad, he was inclined to give in to the pressure - he was after all a human being like us. [17:90-96; 18:110; 41:6]. When called upon by his people to produce a miracle, such as a spring to gush out from the ground, date palms grown by magic, appearance of angels - Muhammad could not do it. His miracle, his only miracle, was the Quran that would transform these poor simple desert people into a rich and energetic civilisation - such as the world had not yet seen.

The reality was that his sole mission was to deliver the Quran and put belief into action. From a helpless orphan and refugee, he became a renowned leader as a commander of an army, a ruler and a statesman of his country. Muhammad was clearly an example and a role model to show how the application of God's guidance can change the lives of individuals and societies.

FUNDAMENTALISM AND MOHAMMADANISM

Fundamentalism is a word we often hear in the media being used against Islam and muslims. But few people know the origin, true meaning and implications of this word. According to the New Webster's dictionary fundamentalism means: "A belief that the Bible is to be accepted literally as an inerrant and infallible spiritual and historical document; an early 20th century protestant movement stressing this belief; any similar belief and movement".

In another dictionary (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English), Fundamentalism has been defined as: "Maintenance of the literal interpretation of the traditional belief of the Christian religion, such as accuracy of everything of the Bible'.

Thus, according to these definitions, fundamentalism is only applicable to Christians. The expansion of so called modernism and the consequential depreciation of moral values in the west called into question many of the teachings of the Bible.

To have strong (religious) conviction is considered by many to be narrow-minded, dogmatic, and even fanatic. In addition, other forces in Christianity like science, philosophy, secularism, and materialism played their roles in raising doubts and fostering scepticism about religion and God.

While coming across many schools of thought in Christianity, one can find that there exists controversy as to the exact text of the Bible. With this historical perspective, it becomes evident that the expression fundamentalism was evolved by Christians for Christians having strong religious convictions and belief in the literal meaning of the Bible. In contrast, there is no such doubt about the Quran - in spite of the fact that fringe movements have often tried to distort it to promote their own diverse beliefs.

The Quran was revealed to Muhammad. Upon receiving each revelation, Muhammad memorised it and recited it to his companions and scribes. All the chapters of the Quran were recorded in writing before Muhammad's death, and many muslims committed the Quran to memory. With this retrospective, it is obvious that fundamentalism is purely a Christian phenomenon having no relationship with muslims.

Western media started to use this word against muslims, particularly after the Islamic Revolution in Iran, because in recent history it was a major movement illustrating the influence of Islam. Some sections of the media continue to defame muslims and Islam, make false accusations against muslims and, by distorting the history, continue to give these impressions about muslims which are untenable and have no basis in

truth. The muslims on their part should treat this word as a calumny against muslims and a deplorable attempt of distorting their and others' view about Islam and the Quran.

It should be understood that this word has very serious and far-reaching implications; it may mean that there are muslims who doubt the infallibility of the Quran, when truthfully speaking there is none, for the muslims who believe in the one God and identify themselves with the true message sent by Him to mankind through His messengers. The continuity of belief in Him and the mode of current living with its challenges and influences is a repeated confirmation of His instructions and their universality for all times.

To those of us who use the expression of 'fundamentalism' for muslims, as a result of the influence of shallow norms of modern living and also of the media, it is a clear manifestation of deficient belief in God and His messages, and lack of knowledge and understanding of the teachings of the Quran.

At this stage, it is worth considering more deeply the understanding, or lack of it, when it comes to the role of Muhammad. This combined with the facts illustrated above contribute to a tradition of misinterpretation with regard to Islam. What is recognised now as Islam was once commonly known as Mohammadanism; a false term generated from the misconception that Muhammad himself was the founder, not simply a messenger. In tandem with this misappropriation of the founding of Islam, the term denies that the one God founded Islam and also implies that Muhammad alone was responsible for the creation of the Quran. Not only this, but the term Mohammadanism further suggests that Muhammad is an aspect of worship, whereas there is no verse in the Quran that supports this claim.

Firstly, there is the issue of misattributing Muhammad’s role as a messenger. The term Mohammadanism is obsolete, and in truth was never an appropriate term.

More proof, were it needed, of the origin of Islam exists in a verse, which states: “I have brought guidance that is no different from what other messengers brought. I have no idea what will happen to me or to you. I only follow what is revealed to me. I am no more than a profound warner.” [Verse 46:9].

This verse reveals that Muhammad was not even the first messenger to follow the way of life as specified in the Quran. It states that “other messengers” had come before Muhammad and followed the same Deen as he did. This is elaborated further in an earlier passage which reads: “He decreed for you the same Deen; the established Order, that He decreed for

Noah and what We reveal here to you and the same that We decreed for Abraham, Moses and Jesus." [Verse 42:13].

Also those who refer to Muhammad as a 'prophet' are also in error as this implies he 'prophesised' or foretold the future. There is sufficient evidence in the Quran to confirm this, not least the clear statement "...nor do I know the future.'' [Verse 6:50].

Muhammad's role was that of a 'profound warner', and the last in a line of many. The term Mohammadanism is thus proven to be obsolete as there is no support in the Quran of Muhammad as a deity or superior human being; rather he is a man, a messenger with a message. Similarly, the lineage including Jesus, Noah and Moses proves that the timeframe of the origin of Islam significantly predates that of Muhammad.

Such is the straightforwardness with which the lineage of God's messengers are set out and their role explained, so is the original text of the Quran in essence incorruptible. The perversion of the text by some translators and the exaggeration by the media may be prevalent misconceptions, but the text itself bears no relation to the tag of 'fundamentalism'. Just as Mohammadanism is an outmoded and archaic term, so is fundamentalism an equally incompatible term for Deen-Islam.

Radicalisation is also a term that has been wrongly applied to Islam by some sections of the media. While it is true that the concepts in the Quran are thorough and far reaching because they seek strict disciplinary measures to overturn corrupt and unjust ideas, it is wrong to say without evidence that they are cruel and oppressive. Radicalisation itself is not necessarily negative but when applied to Islam it is often with the intention of demonising it.

The Quran does instruct muslims to initiate sweeping changes, and these may indeed be radical in the sense that they are profound. However, these challenges are there to improve mankind's situation and move it forward to a better future.

FREE WILL AND BELIEF IN GOD

During a question and answer session after one of Chomsky's talks, a student asked: "Is there free will?"
"Did anyone compel you to ask this question?" Chomsky replied.
" No." said the student.
"There," Chomsky remarked, "you have your answer."

People throughout history have asked for proof of God's existence and the Quran details many of these demands. They have asked to be shown miracles, instant abundance of fruit, feasts to be spread out before them and even a book to be sent down from the sky so that they could touch and feel.[1042]

Some people, even those who profess belief in Quran, continually say that there is no solid proof of God's existence and that they just believe because of faith and then bizarrely insist that this is the logical view. They say God cannot be proved or disproved. And they believe because of faith in the unseen, as logically the negative cannot be proved.

To believe out of faith (belief without proof) is a poor reason. An intelligent person will believe in God because of the profound guidance He reveals through his messengers. If a person believes because of faith, then one god or belief is good as another.[1043]

More importantly, those who insist that there is no solid proof of God, have missed the point. Yes, belief in God is essential to underpin accountability, but it is not the *purpose* of creation. This aspect is the key to understanding the *reason* for creation of man. If the *raison d'être* was to believe in God, it would have been made absolutely clear. But this is not the case. The Quran says that had God wanted, everyone on the earth would have believed. He could have forced acceptance.[1044] Indeed the vast universe and all that is in it concedes to this, and operates under His direction, willingly or unwillingly.[1045]

If belief in God, His messengers and His guidance was the function, and He *could* have compelled belief, then the question is WHY didn't He? If this is so easy for God then WHY did he not do this? Why does God not just show himself and once and for all make people believe in Him?[1046]

[1042] **People** have always been looking for miracles and a saviour. To become fit and healthy you have to eat balanced diet and take regular exercise - no-one can do it for you. Similarly *YOU* have to do the virtuous works to develop your Self - no-one can do it for you. See verses 17:90-96.
[1043] **People** believe because of the profoundness of the guidance that God reveals. See verse 7:75.
[1044] **Enforced** belief would have no value. See verses 10:99; 11:118.
[1045] **The universe** operates under the ordinance of God - not 'free will'. See verses 3:83; 13:15.
[1046] **When God appears** - everything is done and dusted - no time left. See verse 2:210.

To answer this question we need to ask why God created man, what is man's function on this earth?

The function of a plant is manifold, how it fulfils its purpose is by being what it is. Given the right condition an apple seed will grow into an apple tree and will produce a crop of apples. It has no choice but to follow its destiny (Arabic: *taqdir*). Should the conditions not be right: too windy, too cold, too hot, wrong kind of soil, too much rain, too little rain, and so on, it will not produce a good crop, if any at all. The conditions for a successful crop of apples are determined not by the apple tree, but by the natural laws; the ordinance of God. The seed has no choice, it simply develops (or not, as the case may be) according to external factors.

Birds and animals too have different functions in the system and they also have inherent behaviour directed by instinct. A robin builds a nest in much the same as any other robin and eats the same food as other robins. A lion too behaves in more or less the same way as lions have always done. There is very little a lion or a robin can do internally to influence its own life. They have never done that, and are never likely to. It is man who has reached the top of this tree and has come to dominate the world because of his acquired ability to do so. This is because man is different not only in degree but also in kind. His intelligence in range and capacity is far greater than any animal. His thinking ability supersedes all animals. Even given difficult or adverse conditions, the human can rise to the challenge in an innovative and original way.

While man was at one time, like all animals, subject to the forces of nature, now he has a great deal more control.[1047] But this is means to an end and his real power, unlike plants and animals, is the 'free will' to choose his destiny, his *taqdir*. This is what allows him to achieve his true purpose in life; to develop his Self to a higher status and become fit for the next stage in evolution.

The human being has 'free will' and can choose, while other creations such as the solar system, the plants, the animals follow determined laws. God could have created people the same way. A belief that is forcibly imposed on an individual has no value for him or for the world at large.

For an individual to develop, it is essential to go through the proper process, and each Self must have the *free will* to do good or evil, because individuals develop or regress by the *choices* they make, and therefore *must* have the freedom to do so. *There is no value in forced belief.* This is why God does not compel people to believe.

[1047] Verses 2:34; 15:30; 17:61. Man is given the power to harness all the forces of nature - except of course his Ego: Iblees, the shaitan, the 'free will' aspect of his Self which he needs to control though self-discipline and self-restraint by following guidance from God. See also verse 7:201.

To the monotheists, the atheist says, “You reject many gods and I only reject one.” - but which god is it that he rejects?

Is it Thor, wielding a hammer and making thunder? Is he Zeus of Olympians? Can he be Hanuman, the god who is half human, half monkey, or even Jesus, the supposed human manifestation of God? These are just a few choices from the many dozens available.

It is understandable that intellectuals, academics and other thinking people turn away from belief in God. Gods that look like people (or indeed animals), have emotions, weaknesses, and die or commit suicide are poor candidates. Add to this their demands for blood sacrifice, pointless prayer and rituals, and the case against god and gods becomes stronger. It is not surprising, therefore, that the intelligent person is quick to discard the religious notion of God.

In many eastern countries to be openly atheist is almost impossible. Prominent atheists tend to be from the west, and as many have a Christian background, give little attention or credence to eastern literature such as the Quran. Coming from a religious background or growing up in a society that believes God is like a man, the son of God, born of a virgin mother, who is sacrificed by his father would deter any reasonable person.

But atheism has a problem. This position gives atheists a blind spot because they look at God through the prism of religion. They reject God when in reality they should be rejecting religion. It is religion that steals the identity of God and distorts it.

What then exactly is the nature of God? God’s description in the Quran does not give Him shape, form or animate features but attributes. The word *Allah* in the Quran is not a name for God. It simply means the One God. Even the Arabic speaking Christians use *Allah* for God.

The short chapter in the Quran titled *Al-Ikhlaas* [Sura 112], meaning *The Absoluteness*, expresses these attributes in a most succinct manner, attributes that, as the Absolute Self, can belong only to God.

The first verse of this Sura emphasises the attributes of *'Ahadiyyah'* or Oneness: "Proclaim: He is the One and only God.” The word *'*One*'* *(Ahad)* is exceptionally rich in meaning. It connotes unity, uniqueness and wholeness. It identifies the implicit qualities of Self-identity, Self-consistency and peerless integrity. Nothing from outside can secure a lodgement in it. Its unity is not paralleled anywhere in the universe. Of course, only the ultimate Self possesses unity of this kind. A weak personality, with its ever-changing attitudes and whims, cannot lay claim to such oneness.

The second verse refers to the divine attribute of *"samadiyyah"* or Self-dependence. The term defines independence, Self-reliance and Self-sufficiency. *"Samad"* is the being which depends only on its own Self and on nothing else, a being that is eternally enduring and absolutely free.

The third verse, "He does not beget. Nor was He begotten." refers to another important divine attribute. God, as the Absolute Self, is Self-subsistent. God did not come into being through the process of procreation and does not have a spouse and therefore neither does He procreate. God exists and has always existed.

The fourth and last verse, "And there is none comparable with Him", shows that this divine Self is unique. No copy or replica of this Self can exist. In the realm of the divine Self, there is no room for duplication. No laws are applicable to this Self, which is a law unto itself; in fact, laws emanate from God.

This, in short, is the true description of God: unique, in every sense of the word. With this description in view, is it possible that the human being, who barely understands the world he lives in, a world which is like a grain of sand in the universe, can encompass the one who sustains all that is in the heavens and the earth? It would be like a fruit fly trying to understand Einstein.

However, this does not confront the difficult questions that the atheist seeks the answers to. One of the main arguments of atheists is that, if there is a God, He would not allow pain and suffering such as bone cancers and the existence of deadly creatures like worms that burrow into the eyes of children, making them go blind. This, the atheist says, is utterly unfair. Why should I, the atheist asks, respect such a capricious, mean minded, stupid god who creates a world so full of injustice and pain? The world is clearly created by a maniac, the atheist says, and we have to spend our lives on bended knees thanking him. God could easily have created a world in which these things did not exist. These things aren't the fault of humans, he says: so why do they have a place in the world? It is perfectly apparent, the atheist concludes, that God is monstrous, and deserves no respect whatsoever and the moment you banish Him, life becomes simpler, purer, cleaner and more worth living.

After reading this argument it may be quite easy to reject the idea of God as a beneficent and merciful being, but let's not stop here: there may be something else that needs attention.

We believe that, because of gravity, releasing a heavy object will make it fall, but we don't suddenly reject the force of gravity because we see an aeroplane that weighs at least 70 tonnes and carries hundreds of passengers, flying 30,000 feet above in the air. This is because we also

believe there are many other factors involved. Perhaps rejecting God along with religion may not be such a reasonable idea, especially as we now have the Quranic description of God before us.

Did God create evil or is evil the consequence of human wickedness? Rather than placing blame on God, perhaps we need to rethink our own contribution in this world.

There are many health hazards in the world which could easily be minimised by wealthy and influential people, as well as governments, who are keen to spend billions in the killing fields around the world but have never invested as much for the rice fields that would feed starving millions.

Social welfare is an act of immeasurable virtue and repeatedly emphasised in the Quran, so help would not go amiss to create environments that reduce the chances of children suffering from parasites, starvation and displacement that cause such misery to the most vulnerable people on earth.

It may come as a surprise to atheists who use the argument of an uncaring God, but there are many disasters that *are* the fault of human beings and they cause a great deal of misery. Humans left to their own devices are more likely to be greedy, avaricious and murderous.

The sinking of the Titanic killed more than 1500 people; how the 'unsinkable' ship sank is still a mystery. Questions have been raised as to the true nature of the 'accident', as some claim that it was the Olympic, its sister ship, that was sunk in an insurance scam by greedy men in a position to do so. This may not have been an 'act of God' after all.

Equally, who could we blame for the immeasurable misery caused by atomic bombs dropped onto Hiroshima and Nagasaki? What were the effects on the innocent children in these two devastated cities? What about the Bhopal disaster in India? How many people suffered? Should we blame God for these too? Is He the monster that caused these catastrophes? Or was it state and corporate greed for yet more profit and power?

An atheist says that God is selfish when he allows bad things to happen. Did God arrange the potato famine in Ireland (1845-1852), for which Prime Minister Tony Blair issued an apology in 1997, killing over one million men, women and children? Or was it the self-interested absentee English landlords and economic instability caused by English laws that changed dearth into disaster? Thalidomide, a lucrative drug of the fifties, caused at least 10,000 children to be severely disabled. Did God cause the disabilities or was it the greedy drug company, Chemie Grünenthal? Cancer and ill health can be caused by smoking. How does this affect the children who become, by default, passive smokers? Will the avaricious tobacco corporations and the tax-hungry governments put an end to this misery?

The atheist whines about the misery in the world, but what is he doing to bring to account the perpetrators he does know about?

Do people make this a life 'simpler, purer, cleaner and more worth living?' If the majority of people on earth are decent, good human beings, then why is the world not a better place? In reality it is the *human beings* that are most eager to exploit and profit from the very chaos that they create and the misery that befalls on their fellow human beings. This is because they can, and they can because they have the *choice* and the *freedom* to do so.

Should God stop all the bad things happening in the word? This is presuming that we all agree on what 'bad' means. Would people prefer that the world was liberated from all the pain, misery and disaster? There would be no pain of birth, no illness and no death. The world would have no animals that lived by hunting and no death caused by savage killing on a daily basis. Presumably we want a world such as the one where there are no meat eaters and no plant eaters - some Hindus don't even eat certain vegetables. No child would play in case they fell and grazed their knee, or could be hit by a ball in case they cried. No one would sit any exams in case they failed, and everyone would look the same in case someone felt inferior because of their looks.

God created everything in truth, to allow mankind to develop by his own endeavour. It is man's actions that give the consequence of evil. God gave man choice, and good or evil are the consequences of that choice.

The real monsters are around us and if we deem ourselves to be good, it is our incumbent duty to get rid of them. In the Quran we have a beacon to recognise who they are. It is the good examples that will be the real threat to these monsters, and the sooner we banish them, the sooner we will have a world free of turmoil and fear.

We live in a world where we grow, develop, both physically and mentally, and where our Self has the opportunity to flourish.

This may be a tough world but in reality it's our friend. In this life the odds are set against us, but the obstacles are there not to frustrate us but to bring out the best in us. They are designed to put us on our mettle and permit the indomitable spirit we possess to reveal itself in all its glory. We develop ourselves in the course of overcoming obstacles. Frustration forces us to reconstruct our personality. Rebuffs and set-backs toughen and harden us, and by facing challenges, we develop a mature personality, so even at times when the world appears to be cruel and unkind, in the long run it turns out to be not our enemy, but our friend.

The atheist does not believe in God because he says there is no proof. But he is quite happy to believe a scientist who says there are a billion stars and never thinks he should count them. He is happy to believe in Socrates,

Queen Victoria and Hitler, none of whom he has ever met, yet he accepts the books and films that tell us about them as if they were the whole truth. For most people the evidence of the lives of the rich and famous, whom most of us are never likely to meet, is inferential, just as is the evidence for God. But evidence for God is more than just inferential.

The assertion of the Quran is that it is the message from God, with God making a claim on ownership of your life. Would it not be an intelligent thing to check if this claim stands up? God speaks to us in the Quran and points to His signs, the evidence that is in the universe for us to discover. Yes, the most conclusive proof would be if He were to present Himself and perform a feat that only God could perform. But then, that would be the end of the matter. A person who sees God would be compelled to believe and to follow His guidance - then the atheist would cry foul and claim that he is robbed of his freedom of choice. In truth, enforced goodness has little value and cannot and does not enrich the Self.

How a person sees God depends on his or her upbringing. People generally see God as having human qualities but in more perfect form than their own. The earth, as we now know, is an oblate spheroid. Through time it did not change its shape but people, through discovery, changed from believing it to be flat to now accepting the truth. But does it matter, just now, if we believe or not? Even today millions don't know or care. You could no more prove that there is God than prove to the majority of people that the earth is round. As long as the earth does what it's supposed to do, most people don't care if it's flat or round.

When we demand proof we need to ensure it is relative. If DNA information was available 1000 years ago, would an atheist then be able to understand and accept it? Should we only accept evidence that we can see? People may not believe in life after death but a smart individual prepares for the next day because he expects to wake up. He may even have a nest egg investment to see him through the winter of his life. If this is not belief in a continuous future then what is?

"If there is no God, then all that exists is time and chance acting on matter. If this is true then the difference between your thoughts and mine correspond to the difference between shaking up a bottle of Pepsi and a bottle of Coke You simply fizz atheistically and I fizz theistically. This means that you do not hold to atheism because it is true, but rather because of a series of chemical reactions. Morality, tragedy, and sorrow are equally evanescent. They are all empty sensations created by the chemical reactions of the brain, in turn created by too much pizza and beer the night before. If there is no God, then all abstractions are chemical epiphenomena, like swamp gas over putrid water. This means that we have no reason for assigning truth and falsity to the chemical fizz we call reasoning or right and wrong to the irrational reaction we call morality. If no God, mankind is a set of bi-pedal carbon units of mostly water. And nothing else." (Edited version from the original quote by Douglas Wilson).

To believe in God is not just to believe, it is to accept responsibility and ultimate accountability. The majority of people feign, to one degree or another, highly desirable qualities and attitudes that receive great approval, while in their private life such opinions belie their public statements. For example wars are waged for profit, not to fight against aggressors or to defend the oppressed that political statements imply.

Belief in God inspires us to be conscientious and to do things that are good. People who don't believe in God may be very decent, moral people, but for many, with no belief in God or accountability, might is right.

Those who take part in corruption are often intelligent, educated and wealthy. Why do their selfish desires prevail? Why do the laws not inhibit them? Without ultimate accountability, people *may* do good, but there is no real reason *why* they should.[1048]

In Deen-Islam the utmost importance is the focus of value in the development of the individual Self. Everything else is subordinate to this. The Quranic guidance is aimed at producing free good people who expend themselves for others of their own free will, because they realise that it is this action that strengthens their Self making it fit for the future. A potent belief in God, accountability and the life yet to come is a powerful incentive to generosity and selfless service to others. Those who believe in the life yet to come will naturally attach a far greater importance to values that they can carry over to a higher plane than to the material goods that have to be left behind after death.

The atheist can reject God but he cannot deny that we need order. To progress, we need rules and regulations. We need Permanent Values. Countries are consistently trying to move forward by applying common standards of measurements, common standards of trade laws and universal standards of human rights. We see this increasingly in Europe as well as worldwide.

The Quran gives absolute standards for the welfare and progress of mankind - for individuals and societies - without the need for any trial and error. Indeed, these permanent values in the Quran ensure that each individual is accountable to God through His Laws of Requital. The Deen-Islam, the Established Order, is a challenge to atheism as much as it is a challenge to religion because both extremes are wrong.

The real reason people don't believe in God is not that belief is not intellectually possible but because belief in God compels the thinking person to face the fact that he or she *will* be held accountable to the ultimate Reckoner: God.

[1048] **If a man is a tyrant,** and wants to be a tyrant, and has the power to be a tyrant, why should he not continue to be a tyrant? Who has the motivation to stop him? See footnotes 3:158; 7:201.

CRITICISM OF THE QURAN

There are contradictions in the Quran, claim some critics. On close scrutiny however, it turns out they have never really understood the Quran and base their conclusions on poor translations. Their nitpicking is a mischievous way to be antagonistic and create doubt amongst those who are sincere but unfamiliar with the Quran.

The translations generally used lack clarity and are unhelpful in resolving issues raised by the scaremongers, this may lend some support to their otherwise shaky claims. Add to this the reliance on the spurious hadiths and the evidence sways in favour of the adversaries.

For example, in the verse 39:12 the messenger is commanded to "be one of the first to submit." As this is also said by other messengers, the question is then raised as to who really is the first to believe, since they cannot all be the first. What is perhaps deliberately overlooked is that this is just a turn of phrase to mean that they are *amongst* the *foremost* of believers.

The verses used as examples are cherry picked and used in isolation, often to shore up petty assertions. Other verses are also cobbled together making a perfectly reasonable decree seem horrifically medieval and brutal. One such verse that is frequently misquoted is 9:5 as follows:

"But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the Pagans wherever ye find them, and seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war); but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity, then open the way for them: for Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful," *Yousaf Ali translation.*

This verse is used to denigrate muslims as violent and vicious warmongers who convert by the thrust of the sword. They take no prisoners and are commanded to kill any non-muslim on sight.

It has to be confessed that if this verse is misunderstood by some critics, some sympathy can be extended to them because Yousaf Ali's translation is quite inadequate. Here is the proper exposition of the verse:

Once the restricted months of the treaty are over and the mushrikeen still refuse to make peace, you may slay them wherever you encounter them; overcome and punish them and watch them carefully at every place. If they repent and observe their agreed commitments and keep them pure, then you shall give them freedom to move around. God is Protector, Most Merciful. *New Millennium Exposition.*

There are no pagans mentioned in the original Arabic text of this verse. The word used is 'mushrikeen' and to translate mushrikeen as pagans is like calling Guy Fawkes and his gang a group of entertainers putting on a fireworks display. Mushrik (singular) means traitor, an individual who commits high treason, and in this case those who are actively at war with the muslims.

Any community will, if they have the power, attack and kill their enemies; especially those who seek to slaughter them. So why should muslims wait like 'sitting ducks' to be wiped out? Good people defend themselves and always wage war on terror; countries are prepared to annihilate those who persistently threaten their peace and security. For example, the British government allegedly did this in Northern Ireland during the Troubles in Belfast. Years later BBC's Panorama programme reported ex-soldiers who said there was a 'shoot-to-kill' policy and IRA members were hunted down and executed, some of them unarmed. Many civilians are also said to have been killed in these incidents.

The verses in the Quran are about maintaining peace and security; they don't advocate an open season to kill innocent bystanders, but to eliminate only those who take part in active terrorism. The instruction in the verse is to declare open warfare against them. Whether carried out as a covert or overt operation depends on the situation - but not to 'cover up' the killings as the British death squads are suspected to have done in Northern Ireland.

Reading the next verse will reveal that even in this combat scenario, those mushrikeen that seek help should be given aid when they ask for it. Quite a contrast to the picture painted by critics who use this verse to portray muslims as barbaric cut-throats. To get the full picture, all the verses that relate to this decree must be read together and not in isolation.

There are numerous such proddings and pokings by the detractors. But it is apparent that in the absence of any real discrepancies, critics, in their zeal to show inconsistencies fall over themselves to construe things that are simply not there.

There are other claims that Muhammad copied from the Bible. Had he done so then at least some, if not many of the errors in the Bible would have crept into the Quran. This includes the creation of light, which is evident from Biblical narrations as having been created on the first day, before the stars that produce this light. What the Quran does is confirm the truth, and at times this coincides with what may be found in the Bible.

Furthermore, had Muhammad, as claimed by some, written the Quran he would have had to have accurate knowledge of natural phenomena and scientific discoveries that have only been corroborated in recent history. No man living at the time the Quran was revealed would even have had an inkling of such things - let alone describe them in a way that would be generally understood and then confirmed in detail centuries later.

THE SELF: THE HUMAN PERSONALITY

To say that man is nothing but an animal is to deny, by implication, that he has essential attributes other than those of all animals.... It is important to realise that the essence of his unique nature lies precisely in those characteristics that are not shared with any other animal. His place in nature and its supreme significance to man are not defined by his animality but his humanity. Man has certain basic diagnostic features which set him off most sharply from any other animal and which have involved other developments not only increasing this sharp distinction but also making it an absolute difference in kind and not only a relative difference of degree.
G.G. Simpson: The Meaning of Evolution.

The human being consists of physical and non-physical elements. Hair and nails are regularly cut and disposed of, body parts such as heart and lungs can be transplanted. The scientists now say that our cells are frequently renewed and over a seven year period we have a completely new body. However, the body may change but our personal identity is not affected. There is something that bodily changes cannot radically alter; something that continues to endure even if the limbs are amputated and even after the death of the whole body. There is something that remains constant in the changing body. Behind the body is something far more enduring and real. This is the Self, or the human personality, and is often referred to as the 'spirit' or the 'soul', but these are incomplete descriptions of the 'nafs' that is referred to in the Quran.

Life is continuous. We know that matter cannot be destroyed but changes into other matter or a different state. Energy too converts into different types of energy. So why do we think that the human Self cannot develop *and* change into another creation after death?

It's worth looking at a common natural event to understand this process.

After a caterpillar hatches it spends the next part of its life eating the leaves of the tree on which its life began. Then one day, the caterpillar stops eating, hangs upside down from a twig or a leaf and spins itself a silky cocoon or molts into a shiny chrysalis. Within this protective casing, the caterpillar radically transforms its body, eventually emerging as a butterfly. For someone who has never seen this transformation it is difficult to imagine how this can happen, but it does. To quote Richard Fuller: "*There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly.*" Just as the caterpillar thought that life was over, it becomes a butterfly.

Similarly, with a human life, when the body 'dies', the Self emerges as a new creation. The Self is the latent personality that develops or regresses subject to the activities of the individual. It grows not by the subconscious intentions but through the deliberate and premeditated thoughts and acts that the human being performs, and not so much by the social influence to which the individual is exposed, but by the way in which he reacts to it.

Therefore, it is the duty of society to provide opportunities for Self development and it is the duty for individuals to realise such opportunities to their full potential.

Freedom is the indispensible condition of moral life. Morality is irrelevant to a being whose actions are determined by outside forces. This freedom, of course, has its stresses and limitations. Nevertheless, his actions are free in the sense that they are self-determined; choosing freely from the alternatives available. The individual feels free when his actions are in accord with the characteristics of his Self. However, these need to be disciplined and restricted and when these restrictions are imposed, it is for the sole purpose of turning them to the best account.

The self-imposed restrictions are not disparaging to his status as a free individual. Freedom properly channelled is the necessary condition of human development, both individual and social. A weak Self can easily deviate from the right path. Only a strong Self can forge ahead towards the goal of Self-realisation, survive death and take its place in the life yet to come. This is in essence the purpose of life and to achieve this goal, God provides His guidance in the Quran.

The Ego, named Iblees (shaitan) in the Quran, is an aspect of our psyche which is in fact our 'free will' and often manifests as the negative influence and a regressive factor. This is our 'demon' that we constantly have to fight against to progress and strengthen our Self. A 'strong willed' individual will have no problem overcoming this shaitan but the choice is yours whether you concede your negative desires or discipline yourself and face challenges to emerge as a Self fit for not only this life but the life yet to come.[1049]

[1049] **The body** is a temporal capsule to house the Self and facilitate its development. Just as the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, the human journeys on to become a different, potentially better being. In Darb-e-Kalim, Iqbal describes this: *"Life is like a shell and the Self is the pearl drop (concretion) therein; what is the shell worth if it cannot transform the sand grain into a pearl. Through Self-knowledge, Self-restraint and Self-development, the Self can conquer even death."* This birth, life and transition is well illustrated by Carlo Collodi in his children's novel 'The adventures of Pinocchio'. Pinocchio, a marionette, is carved by Geppetto and longs to become a 'real boy'. He faces many challenges, learning to tell the truth and do good and eventually succeeds in attaining his dream. This very simplified story helps understand the development of the Self, that through overcoming obstacles how a person can change and become fit for the next life. Another story, 'The Strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' by Robert Louis Stevenson, shows how the human psyche is in constant conflict with itself. Unless guided, the Self is in perpetual turmoil with shaitan (the 'free will' Ego aspect) seeking to influence it.

THE NEXT STEP IN EVOLUTION

There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly.

Richard Fuller.

Charles Robert Darwin was born in 1809 in England, the son of Robert Waring Darwin, a doctor with the largest medical practice outside London. Even at a young age he was keen in collecting specimens and at 16 years old he attended Edinburgh University. Darwin's lack of interest in medicine disappointed his father, a Church of England member, who then sent him to the University of Cambridge to study divinity.

In August 1831, Darwin was invited to sail as an unpaid naturalist on HMS Beagle. The ship was to survey the east and west coasts of South America and continue to the Pacific islands to establish a chain of chronometric stations. The voyage lasted five years, instead of the planned two, during which Darwin kept meticulous notes and sent back geological and biological specimens.

In 1859, at a time when most people were deeply religious and believed that God created the world in seven days, Darwin published 'On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection'. The book was extremely controversial because the logical extension of Darwin's theory was that man was simply another form of animal. It made it seem possible that people might have evolved, quite possibly, from apes, and it destroyed the prevailing religious view on how the world was created. Darwin was vehemently attacked, particularly by the Church. However, his ideas soon gained favour and have now become widely accepted.

Theory and approach

During his voyage on the Beagle, Darwin read Lyell's 'Principles of Geology' which suggested that the fossils found in rocks were actually evidence of animals that had lived long ago.

These ideas were reinforced by Darwin's discoveries in the Galapagos Islands which lay west of South America. When he returned to England in 1836, Darwin tried to understand his observations and how species evolve. He proposed a theory of evolution which occurred by the process of natural selection. He said that the animals and plants best suited to their environments were more likely to survive and reproduce, passing on the characteristics which helped them survive to their offspring. Gradually, the species would change over time.

In psychology Charles Darwin's theory is considered as the Biological Approach, as it states that change takes place as a biological process, and it is based on the notion of the survival of the fittest. Darwin's Biological

Approach extended beyond perceiving the savagery of the animal world, noted by other scientists who had observed the lion killing the zebra.

Darwin discovered the competition between individuals of a single species. He saw that within a small population the individual with the sharper beak, the longer horn, or the brighter feather might have a better chance to survive and reproduce than other individuals. If such advantageous traits were passed on to new generations, they would eventually be predominant in future populations. Darwin focused his evolutionary analysis within species. Later, biologists came to understand variations within a species as variations in the genes of its individual members, and they explained evolution as the action of natural selection upon genes responsible for advantageous traits.

Keen to verify his approach and theory of natural selection, Darwin enlisted the help of animal breeders. With their experience of artificial selection he could determine how natural selection worked.

Although he still faced many difficulties, Darwin's theory of evolution solved many problems in anatomy, embryology and among other sciences. It also gave us a valuable insight into human evolution.

The next step in evolution

Darwin's theory can also be considered to be the basis of an approach in metapsychology – taking the evolutionary theory of natural selection to the next stage. It is now established that plants and animals are all affected by competitive stress in their environment. Living beings change not by choice, but in response to their environment. Only those who are fit to, pass on their advantageous genes to the next generation.

Even humans have physically changed from the early Homo Ergaster to the emergence of Homo Sapiens. They have evolved from other hominids, apes, placental mammals and even from single celled crystalloids in the primordial mud – all in the process of anthropogenesis.

According to evolutionary metapsychology, the physical maturity of the human body has arrived, and now the development is of a different kind. As the body benefits according to its activity and the quality of food individuals eat; nutritious food and regular exercise create better, healthier bodies. It is now the Self that seeks to advance in this stage of evolutionary development.

The Self is the human personality and it seeks to realise its potential for development. The Self does not come into being through the natural process of procreation but is activated by the spark of human action. It seeks and acquires an identity through an individual's actions. Good (munificent) actions progress its development and bad (regressive) actions

impede it. Only actions prompted by ethical choices affect it; other actions have no bearing on it.

Individuals who live by higher standards and values accelerate their development. For example, to an athlete following a strict regime of a good diet and training each day, the benefits become obvious. The athlete who does not is likely to be a loser.

Similarly, an individual who imposes 'value-orientated' restrictions on his/her Self does it for the sole purpose of turning things to the best account – i.e. to develop the Self. Discipline and restrictions do not detract humans from being free agents; the metapsychologist states that freedom, properly channelled, is the necessary condition for human Self-development.

A person who is consistent and has integrity and strength of character will have no problem in this progression. However, a weak personality, with its ever-changing attitudes, can never be a candidate for success in this evolutionary process.

According to the evolutionary metapsychologist, the body is disposable and interchangeable: nails can be clipped, hair can be cut, amputations occur and dead cells are replaced; also, heart transplants and kidney transplants are common. These are everyday practices in modern times. The body, they say, is only an ephemeral instrument in the evolutionary process that provides an environment for the Self to develop. Actions carried out by the physical body change the nature of the Self: they either develop it or it stagnates, in which case, for all practical purposes, it becomes extinct. However, the developed Self becomes resilient and survives what we call death, progressing to the next stage of life.

As such, the process of evolution that Charles Darwin discovered carries on, except that the present stage of evolution is not by natural selection but by self-determination. The individual has the opportunity to make choices (i.e. what action to take – progressive or regressive), and it is only when the choice is made that subsequent results become inevitable, as the laws of cause and effect take place.[1050]

[1050] **The Self develops** successfully only in the right social environment and only with the correct attitude towards life. This is how evolution progresses, stage by stage and only the fittest, the developed Self can proceed to the next level of life. C.S. Lewis described this succinctly: *"It may be hard for an egg to turn into a bird: it would be harder for it to fly while it's still an egg. We are like eggs at present. And you can't go on forever being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must be hatched or go bad."* The developed Self will soar and the weak and feeble Self will wish it could.

PARENTS, CHILDREN AND FAMILY

The Quran is a book of equitable social standards defined as Permanent Values. These are the tenets that not only hold together individuals and society, but also push forward the progress of humanity in a matrix of harmony. To bring about a developed civilisation, the Quran lays down some basic requirements for those who want to protect themselves from lasting harm. For example, parents and their children have reciprocal commitments and responsibilities to each other: the first of these obligations that parents have to their children is not to kill them, especially because of poverty, hardship or frustration.

This seems to be a bizarre injunction but is not as strange as it first appears. Children are frequently victims of a fatality because parents cannot afford to feed them, marry them off due to exorbitant dowry customs or because they become embroiled in the drama of estranged parents, where one parent murders his or her offspring rather than give them up to their spouse.[1051]

However, we have to concede that usually it is parents who sacrifice more for their children than children do for their parents. When parents neglect their children it rarely goes unnoticed but when children neglect their parents it often occurs without comment.

Parents have a duty to look after the welfare of their children. This includes that they provide adequate food and shelter. It also falls on them to ensure the health and safety of their children. They are required to maintain an environment where their children grow up feeling safe and secure. However, the extent of this responsibility is limited to the means parents have. They are not expected to burden themselves with debt to provide beyond the necessities - so luxuries are out, unless parents have the resources to provide them. In fact, it is a duty incumbent on parents to provide the best, but *not* to stretch beyond their means and undergo undue suffering.[1052]

Parents have an obligation to write a will in the favour of their children, letting them inherit what is rightfully theirs. They are not permitted to cut out any offspring because of ill feeling towards them.

[1051] **Do not kill** your children for fear of poverty. See verse 17:31. A mother (Theresa Riggi) killed her 3 children in Edinburgh, in August 2010, while estranged from her husband. Female infanticide (and neonatricide) is the deliberate killing of newborn female children common in India and China where some sections of society have a bias against females. Poverty, the dowry system, births to unmarried women are among some of the causes. Tragically, poverty is often the cause of maternal filicide in India and China.

[1052] **God does not** impose any burden. See verse 65:7.

Apart from providing the material needs, parents are under strict obligation to provide guidance. This direction has to be based on Permanent Values that give children wholesome discipline yet allow freedom of expression. Parents are charged with the task of awakening the consciousness of their children, showing them that responsibility and accountability are the twin forces that define their character. It is critical that children grow up to be exemplary citizens and this can be done only by good role models which parents should be by the virtue of their position.

In the event that children deviate and get caught up in harmful social influences, then parents should not shoulder the blame or feel guilty, and if it becomes necessary they may disassociate themselves from their aberrant offspring. Conversely, parents ought not to indulge or be too proud of their children as it can create an illusion of supremacy, unrealistic expectations and inevitable disappointment. It is also worth remembering, when relationships disintegrate to an extreme level, children and parents can also become enemies of one another.

However, *shared* values create a strong, unbreakable bond between parents and children, so it is essential for parents to try and instil a sense of high moral and ethical standards in their children.

What about children? What are their commitments to their parents?

First and foremost children have an undeniable duty to *honour* their parents, each one individually and both together. As second only to God, this is the primary tenet for any child, young or old.[1053] Their mother carried them for nine months, gave birth arduously and looked after them when they could not do it themselves. They were weaned, cared for in sickness and in health. While they were young they were provided with nourishment and an environment which allowed them to flourish.

Honour is something which needs to be shown in practical ways. The remembrance of a birthday or an occasional visit is not enough. Neither is leaving them in a 'good' home for the elderly and infirm. *Unless honour manifests as something real and constructive, it is meaningless.*

Honouring parents means not expressing annoyance or speaking harshly to them. To honour means never to mistreat them. It is crucially important to understand this; just as parents should never abuse their children, children are prohibited from ill-treating their parents. [1054]

To honour parents does not in any way imply that children must follow or support them in wrongful things, such as those things that would divert them from adhering to the Permanent Values. In a situation of a great

[1053] **Honour** your parents. See verses 2:83; 2:200; 17:23.
[1054] **Always** treat your parents with kindness. See verses 17:23-25.

conflict or irreconcilable difference, children should move away from their parent or parents, rather than speak to them unsympathetically or cruelly.

In preference to relatives, neighbours, friends or other people in the community, children should do what is best, first for their parents and then for others. It is the right of parents to expect decent care and financial support when necessary over and above anyone else. When Joseph had the opportunity to raise his parents' position both in status and wealth, he did so without hesitation, thus fulfilling his duty to his parents.[1055]

Just as parents have a duty to write a will in favour of their children, children, too, have a responsibility to include their parents in their will. Any benefit to other relatives or indeed other people is secondary.

Children may ask about how to allocate their welfare spending. Welfare expenditure begins at home and that is why children are directed to give a portion of their income to their parents, before looking after the wants of other relatives or those in need.

Now it could be asked, what if the parents are financially comfortable and have their own income? Even if parents have their own earnings and enjoy a decent living standard, the obligation of the children does not diminish. Just as parents are expected to keep their children in the best manner within their means, children too are expected to maintain their parents in a manner according to their own capacity. If that raises their parents' standard of living from good to better, then all the more reason to do so.

The inheritance law gives, in the absence of a will, more to the male than the female. This is simply because the financial responsibility to support, parents, spouse and children fundamentally falls on the male children.

During and before the period of maturity and earning capacity of children, parents pay a heavy price, albeit voluntarily, to ensure that children are well supported and looked after. This not only includes their general wellbeing but also the education and other opportunities afforded to them. The hardships some parents suffer can be unspeakable. Often children are never aware or informed of this. Therefore, for children to raise and maintain the dignity of their parents, both financially and socially, is an obligation and not a favour. It is a duty, not a charity.

No individual can claim to be self-made, no matter how successful he or she becomes through what appears to be their own effort. Can anyone rise without the foundation of parents, family, community and society? The supporting hands that were there at the beginning remain for many years after. Throughout the developing stages of their children, and often beyond childhood and youthful years, parents give and they give - and still give more.

[1055] **Support** your parents financially. See verses 2:215; 12:100.

The natural instinct of parents is self-sacrifice. It's also intrinsic love, hopefully mutual, and not only in the emotional sense but one that transpires as sincere care for the support and wellbeing of each other.

In the Quran, the obligations of both the parents and children are highlighted and, while in each case the individual family circumstances need to be considered, whatever the position, the principles should not change. Undoubtedly, the parent-child relationship is unique. It cannot be broken or discarded. It will always be there in some form or another, so both should be sincere well-wishers of each other.

Now the concluding question is this: what do children, when they become adults, do on an *ongoing* basis that has a positive and life-enhancing impact on the lives of their parents? *The answer will tell us the real nature of the relationship between parents and their children.*

What is a family?

While individuals are distinct persons in their own right, they are also part of a family - but what is a family? A family is not just a group of people related by blood ties but are those individuals who form the fabric of each other's lives because they share the same values; they share the day-to-day activities that bond them together. This does not mean living in each other's pockets but taking part in simple things like eating together, having a chat about the day's events, doing some things together, cooking, gardening or even helping around the house. In short, spending time together enhances each other's lives by adding value every day.

An essential part of belonging to a family is sharing values that form the basis of how we live. This is the very foundation that binds the family together. For muslims it means fulfilling obligations and not just exercising your rights.

When you start to make excuses for not wanting to do things together, you know the problems have started. Where there's a will, there's a way.

While working and spending leisure time with friends is important, nothing can replace an enduring relationship with your family. As the saying goes: love your friends but don't forget to treat your family a little better.

You deserve success – but how much?

Successful and ambitious individuals may feel that the achievements they make are by his or her efforts alone. Is this true? The main fallacy inherent in this argument is made evident when we look at the conditions on which success depends. There are four factors that contribute to success:

1. Physical and mental capacities.
2. Education and training.
3. Opportunities available.
4. Effort and hard work.

It is obvious that an individual can take credit for only the fourth factor, i.e. the work a person puts in. A person's natural endowments are a gift of God. These are not acquired through individual efforts. For the education and training that is received, the debt is due to the community. The family (parents) have provided the opportunities for producing wealth. It follows that a person can justly claim only that portion which has been earned by the outcome of the labour that has been put in. The work that has been performed entitles him to a share in the wealth produced and not to the whole of it.

Taking into consideration that the purpose of life is Self-development and being a benefactor of humanity is a vital part in achieving this, the Quranic proposition, "Only that survives which is for the benefit of all mankind", together with its corollary, "only those survive who benefit all mankind", are the fundamental principles of Self-development. See verses 2:3-4 and 53:33-40. *The law is not the 'survival of the fittest' but the 'survival of the most munificent'*. In other words, according to the standard laid down by the Quran, *only the most munificent are the fittest to survive*. Individuals who understand that life is continuous, and those who have imbibed the true spirit of the Quran will steer clear of selfishness and will dedicate themselves to the service of humanity, beginning with parents; those who initiated and nurtured life.

An example of this Quranic concept is well illustrated by the American economist Richard Wolff and is given below. His complete YouTube video is worth watching. His words are paraphrased here.

Mark Zuckerberg is the owner of the Facebook idea. Was he creative? Yes he was, and there is no doubt about it. But before he created it he had to be educated by teachers who helped him learn and the parents who fostered him to do well at school. The information he received from the media also educated him, as did all kinds of social and business encounters that helped him move forward.

Mark Zuckerberg also had to be developed. There had to be inventions by many other people too, such as the invention of computers, but Zuckerberg had nothing to do with the development of modern computers. But the development of Facebook is unthinkable without modern computers. So Zuckerberg's achievement is not really his achievement at all. He put a number of different ideas together in a creative new way - which deserves

praise - but the things he put together were the creations of other people those who taught Zuckerberg how to use those computers, those who wrote the books that he studied and the people who provided him with the support along the way. In reality Facebook is not just the creation of Zuckerberg but the creation of many people, the whole society, the thousands who contributed their creativity to all the different parts which are essential to what Facebook has become. However Zuckerberg is a multi billionaire (net worth over £50 billion as at 2017), while most of the people can hardly make ends meet, even though without their contribution Zuckerberg could not have done what he did. Is this not a bizarre society that gives most to the last person in the chain of creativity. One individual gets the big prize and everybody else gets very little or nothing at all.

There is only one thing stranger than dividing up the wealth created by Facebook and giving it overwhelmingly to one person, that is then turning round and trying to justify it by saying that the whole creation of Facebook was just Zuckerberg's brilliance. Nothing of this sort can be true. To reward, then try to justify such an inequitable reward, unimaginable wealth, at the expense of all others who contributed is unreasonable.

If we didn't do that with the rich but utilised a portion of the wealth that we give to one man like Zuckerberg, to alleviate the poverty of millions, would make a more balanced society. A society that does not see the justice in this distribution is a strange one to claim that it takes morality and social ethics seriously.[1056]

In the Charity and Social Welfare of the Concepts section of this book the Universal Basic Wage (sometimes called Citizen's Income) has been discussed. Please read this also. Looking at the above we can also say that a maximum salary can also be put into place, essentially a cap on earnings. This is not a new idea and was also put forward by American president Franklin Roosevelt in 1944 and also by the Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn in 2017. This could be applied by a tax on earnings of over a fixed threshold. According to the concept discussed above it could be a minimum tax of 75% on income of over and above the threshold, leaving 25%, the fourth factor, the individual's personal effort as part of the salary.

See also sections on:

- Usury, Gambling and Slavery
- Economic Exploitation
- Charity and Social Welfare
- Hajj, the Challenges of Life

[1056] **Richard Wolff** on YouTube video: Blaming the poor and worshiping the rich. His complete video is worth watching. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPmHMDsSW_Q633

POLYGAMY, MARRIAGE, DOWRY & MAHR

Polygamy is generally understood to be the practice of simultaneously having more than one wife. The Quran does not forbid this practice but contrary to popular belief does not encourage it either.

In many countries it is socially acceptable and sometimes desirable for men to have more than one wife at the same time. Women often outnumber men, and in times of hardship, war and other difficult situations, especially if a woman is widowed or divorced and possibly with children, it may be convenient for a woman to accept a plural marriage.

However, for most women, sharing a husband is highly disagreeable for probably the same reasons why a man may not want to share his wife with another man as in the case of polyandry, the practice of one woman simultaneously married to more than one man. Psychologically, the tendency for men to share a wife is quite objectionable and polyandry has a major predicament as any of the husbands may not be able to determine if his shared wife's child is his, whereas in polygamy, this can never be the case. So to determine hereditary rights there can be no objection to polygamy but polyandry is forbidden as made clear in verses 4:24 and 60:10. Married women who have escaped mushrik husbands and thus by default annulled their marriage can re-marry. Even in this case a compensation (reimbursement of the mahr payment)[1057] is due to the previous husband and must be paid where possible.

Women are also child-bearing and in the main child-caring partners in a marriage and because of this, have more arduous lives and their capacity to earn may also be limited. Therefore it is more practical for men, especially if they are wealthy, to take on the responsibility of more than one wife and the many children that they are likely to have. In a large household, perhaps in a joint or extended family, women can share their domestic duties too. Women can also more easily adapt to sharing a husband and often prefer to be looked after in a marriage than live as a single parent, which may have many difficulties of its own. The dignity provided by a marriage, even a polygamous marriage, is far better than promiscuous living that may arise from long term single status.

While there is nothing wrong with polygamous marriages, provided there is full consent of all partners concerned, the Quran does not explicitly encourage or forbid such arrangements.

The people who support polygamous marriage often quote verse 4:3 of the Quran as an open endorsement of the practice. It will therefore be

[1057] **Mahr:** This is the groom's gift to the bride, a security in circumstances of widowhood or a means of support in case of divorce.

useful to look at the various ways this verse is translated. Comments are given after each translation.

Yousuf Ali Translation "If ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or (a captive) that your right hands possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice."

When Sura 4 is read from the beginning it is apparent that this section is about orphans. This verse begins with the mentioning of justice to orphans, so is it not strange that suddenly, mid-sentence, the translator conveys that this is now about men marrying multiple women of their choice? Ali goes on to say that if you can't deal with the prospect of more than one wife, you should marry only one captive woman, so according to him, the alternatives are: to marry up to four women or only one captive woman. What about men who may want to have monogamous marriage with a woman who is not a captive? This is a tangled and confusing translation.

Maududi Translation "If you fear that you might not treat the orphans justly, then marry the women that seem good to you: two, or three, or four. If you fear that you will not be able to treat them justly, then marry (only) one, or marry from among those whom your right hands possess. This will make it more likely that you will avoid injustice."

This is much the same as Yusuf's but without the option to marry captive women, although those "whom your right hands possess" are probably considered to be slave women. The subject matter here is also mangled with orphans, women, and marriage without any real continuity, and neither of these translations show how marrying up to four women of your choice does justice to orphans.

Most translations appear to be in the same vein as above, but there are two translations that have a somewhat different angle:

Rashad Translation "If you deem it best for the orphans, you may marry their mothers - you may marry two, three, or four. If you fear lest you become unfair, then you shall be content with only one, or with what you already have. Additionally, you are thus more likely to avoid financial hardship."

Like most of Rashad's work, at first it seems quite reasonable, but in reality there is something that is not quite right. The perceptive reader must surely ask the question: How on earth do you marry the mother of an orphan? An orphan is a child whose parents, including the mother, have died, so unless we accept necrophilia as an act permitted by God, under normal circumstances it would be impossible to marry the dead mother of an orphan, never mind two, three or four at any one time.

Reformist Translation "If you fear that you cannot be just to fatherless orphans, then marry those whom you see fit from the women, two, and three, and four. But if you fear you will not be fair then only one, or whom you already have contract with. So that you do not commit injustice and suffer hardship."

This is also an interesting one. According to standard dictionaries, an orphan is a child, both of whose parents are dead or have abandoned it permanently. Only a child who has lost both parents is called an orphan. The mother's condition is usually relevant only when referring to animals. If she has gone, the offspring is an orphan, regardless of the father's condition. Is God talking about animals or other non-human beings here? If not then why is the translator using words like “fatherless orphans”? Again, this is a hotchpotch translation, a piecing together of odd concepts to justify polygamy. It just isn't there, and any intelligent person will see that.

So what *does* this verse say? Well, let's get the meaning of the verse with a proper exposition:

New Millennium Exposition (NME) “When you deem it best for the orphans in your care, you may marry them off in twos, threes, or fours. If you fear lest you become unfair to any of them, then you shall arrange marriage for only one at a time, preferably with someone already within your acquaintance. Additionally, you are thus more likely to avoid financial hardship.”

The verse is now clear: it's about *orphans* who are under the care and responsibility of considerate men. They must look after the orphans' interests and when the orphans come of age, *marry them off* in twos, threes or fours. If they cannot do this justice to all of them, then they should *marry them off* one at a time. Now the whole verse comes together and makes sense.

Allegations are frequently made against Muhammad for being a polygamist but it should be remembered that his first wife Khadijah was a widow when she married Muhammad, the messenger. During her lifetime, he had no other wife but her and was married to her for 25 years. He remained in a monogamous marriage until he was 50 years old. After her death, his other marriages were for political reasons or to support widows with children. To raise a family with one woman is far better for everyone, especially the children, and unless circumstances dictate, plural marriages are to be avoided.

In verse 4:129 it is clear that polygamy is strongly discouraged as a norm because it is difficult, if not impossible, to be fair to more than one wife. The only indication that polygamy is allowed comes from verse 4:23 that prohibits marriage to two sisters at the same time, the conclusion being that if one cannot be married to two sisters simultaneously then a man can be married to two women who are not sisters, at the same time.

If a marriage is not working then divorce is the answer. Often, in some communities, the man marries a second wife, but to be unhappily married without either partner having the opportunity to remarry is wrong. A man should not leave his wife in suspense while he gets married to a second wife. A woman who is unhappy in her marriage has an equal right to ask for divorce, as does a man.

So while polygamy is acceptable, it is essential to ensure that mutual consent must be obtained between all concerned. However, it should go without saying, as confirmed in verse 4:129, that it is objectionable to marry another woman to the detriment of an existing marriage.

Marriage: dowry and mahr

Traditionally a dowry is a gift of money or valuables given by the bride's family to that of the groom to permit their marriage. In societies where payment of dowry is common, unmarried women are seen to attract stigma and tarnish the household's reputation. So it is in the bride's family's interest to marry off their daughter as soon as she is eligible. In some areas where this is practiced, the size of the necessary dowry is directly proportional to the groom's social status, thus making it virtually impossible for lower class women to marry into upper class families. In some cases where a woman's family is too poor to afford any dowry whatsoever, she is either simply forbidden from marrying or becomes a concubine to a richer man who can afford to support a large household. Such an arrangement is not acceptable to those who live within Quranic values.

The tradition of giving dowries is today perhaps most well known in the Asian countries of China, Pakistan and India, where the practice is still very common, especially in rural areas, despite being prohibited by law. However, dowries have been a part of civil law in almost all countries, those in Europe included. Dowries were important social components of Roman marriages. Medieval Germans had the tradition of dowry, both working to give a start in life to the young couple, as well as to secure the bride's future. This German tradition was followed by most people in medieval and modern Europe. Only in the few recent centuries has the dowry disappeared from law in Europe.

The converse of dowry is the German morgengab - a sum paid by the bridegroom to the bride's parents or guardian. Its purpose was to secure the girl for such possibilities as widowhood or loss of other means to survive. There is no mention of any dowry payment or 'bride price' in the Quran and therefore any such practice is not Islamic.

Mahr is the groom's gift to the bride; a security to the bride in circumstances of widowhood or a means of support in case of divorce, although the Mahr is a kind of Germanic morgengab (the Persian equivalent is called *mahrieh*) and is an important part of a marriage. However, it is not the same as a traditional dowry or a morgengab, in that it is the husband-to-be who gives the gift to the bride. However, unlike a bride price or Germanic morgengab, the gift is given directly to the bride and not to her father or guardian. Although the gift can be, and often is,

money, it can be anything so long as it is agreed upon by both the bride and groom.

Nikah is a marriage contract between a man and a woman. This can only be valid when both parties consent and have reached puberty. Two witnesses are required and a public announcement should be made. This can be a ceremony where guests are invited to a reception following the wedding. A marriage certificate should be provided as a legal record of the event. No priest is needed to solemnize the marriage but someone to officiate the marriage should be in attendance, such as a registry officer employed by the local government.

The Quran lays down the following requirements before getting married: First of all, marriage has to be between believers. [Verse 2:221]. So, the first step is that muslims bring in themselves those qualities that are described in the Quran and match themselves with that description before getting married. Both people should be adults (i.e. past puberty). The man should be a mature and responsible person, and able to make sound decisions in life and should have sufficient resources, a job for example, so as to support a family.

The man is allowed to select a partner of his choice, thus exercising his free will. Similarly, women cannot be forced into getting married - they also have to exercise their free will and choice. In Verse 4:21, it is stated that women have to take a contract (Arabic: *meesaq*) from men. A contract requires the free will of both parties. A contract in which a person is forced to do something against his/her will does not constitute a meesaq. If a man proposes to a woman directly, there is no harm in it. But secret marriages are not endorsed. Love affairs, open or secret, of any sort are also not allowed. Believing women cannot remain married to their husbands if they are unbelievers; the same goes for believing men. Marriage with a man or woman who commits adultery is forbidden to believers.

While marriage between people from different nations, cultures and races is allowed, marriage with non-muslims, that is disbelievers, is forbidden. The reason for this is simple. The Quran gives optimum values that harmonise, develop and prosper communities. These are the foundations for a successful life. For a muslim to marry a person with lower, regressive values that conflict with the high standards set out in the Quran would be detrimental to family life and would thus impede Self development. Not only that but this also affects society in the long term.

Two people with different and conflicting outlooks cannot be successful marriage partners and therefore God forbids such unions. See verse 2:221.

DOMESTIC ABUSE: VIOLENCE AGAINST WIVES

One of the verses that causes great difficulty to the traditionalist is where the roles of men and women is defined. The reason for this is that due to poor and biased translation, generally to conform with some fabricated hadith or cultural custom, it has been wrongly interpreted.

First of all the verse is about the physical, psychological, and physiological differences in men and women, and as a consequence of these differences it describes their division of labour and roles in society.

Without taking into account any unusual exceptions, under certain circumstances and conditions women cannot work; such as in pregnancy, and when they are lactating and breast feeding, it can be impractical. Some types of work they cannot do such as mining, frontline fighting in wars or sub-sea diving during gestation of their unborn child. So their important role as homemakers, wives and mothers is defined. The duty to provide for and maintain them falls on men. As does the duty to die for them, if necessary, when they need protecting in times of hardship and war.

As with men, women's ability to do certain kinds of work is defined, simply by the virtue of their being men or women, and young children need their mothers more than they need their fathers. The law on maternity leave supports this view, as it is important for women to have time off during pregnancy.

As head of the household - that's what the word husband means: one who manages the house, i.e. master of the household. As 'husbands' men also need to maintain discipline in the home and should this break down they must take action to return the home to order. However, whatever the situation there is no hint of any mental or physical abuse permitted against the wife. The instructions are to keep matters amicable. The threat of divorce arises only when the relationship has irretrievably broken down. Divorce can then be instigated by either the man or the woman.[1058]

Domestic violence is a real concern for many, and some justify it by saying that it is acceptable because it is permitted in the Quran. But is it? Generally people are inclined to say that while permitted, the 'beating' should be light. Here is the verse, translated traditionally, that causes some people difficulty: "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct,

[1058] **Husband:** Old Norse word *husbondi,* meaning 'master of the house'. It also means 'man who has/manages land and stock'. As the master of the house was usually also a spouse, it encompasses all the household. So even in English, the word *husband* confirms that it is the man who has from early times been considered to be the maintainer and manager of the household.

admonish them (first), (next), refuse to share their beds, (and last) beat them (lightly); But if they return to obedience, seek not against them means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, Great (above you all)." [Verse 4:34]. **Abdullah Yusuf Ali Translation.**

Supposing a wife was guilty of some sort of ill-conduct, whatever that was, her husband is required to admonish her (*fa-'izu)* which means to 'to fondly persuade'). However, if the sweet talk does not work, and she persisted in her bad ways, he then is to refuse intimacy with her. If this is not working either and she still persists in behaving badly, what would come next? According to this translation, it would be a beating for the wife. After this the next step would be divorce, made especially messy if domestic violence had been used.

God Himself describes divorce in His own words: "let her go amicably" [Verse 33:49]. "Go through with the separation equitably" [Verse 65:2]. "(Allow the divorced women to) leave amicably" [Verse 2:229].

It seems that something is not quite right; there appears to be an apparent confusion. One minute the wife is getting beaten and now there is gentleness with the following reassurances:

"If the couple must decide to part, God will provide for each of them from His bounties. God is Bounteous, Most Wise." [Verse 4:130].

"You shall allow a divorced wife to live in the same home in which they lived with you and do not make life so miserable for them that they are compelled to leave on their own." [Verse 65:6].

Going back and checking that controversial verse (and traditional translation), reveals that there is something that seems to be amiss: where did "beat them" come from? Traditionalists glean it from the root word 'daraba', which has been translated to mean anything from a tap on the shoulder to striking or beating.

However, more correctly it should be translated as "to set forth" or "to make a clear statement or proclamation".

The root word 'daraba' has been used in the Quran in other verses, 58 times, and each time it should be correctly translated as cites, sets forth or advances as in the following verses:

"God thus cites analogies for the truth and falsehood." [Verse 13:17].

"Do you not see that God sets forth the example..." [Verse 14:24].

"God thus advances the examples for all mankind..." [Verse 14:25].

"God thus sets forth parables for mankind..." [Verse 24:35].

"He cites for you herein an example from among yourselves..." [Verse 30:28].

"God cites as examples of those who disbelieved..." [Verse 66:10].

If the Quran permits you to beat your wife then reasonable people certainly missed it in their reading. All intelligent people come up with verses that ask for muslims to refrain from aggression and violence:

"Have you noted those who were told 'You do not have to fight'..." [Verse 4:77].

"They suppress their anger and forgive people." [Verse 3:134].

There are also numerous verses in the Quran describing the beautiful relationship between husband and wife:

"…He placed in your heart love and care towards your spouses." [Verse 30:21].

"He gives every man an opportunity to find a mate as company and to harmonise with her." [Verse 7:189].

Men are told that they "…shall treat [women] in a pleasant manner." [Verse 4:19].

"The men are the protectors and maintainers of women…" [Verse 4:34]. "They are your companions and you are their companion." [Verse 2:187]. "If you loathe them, you may dislike something wherein God has placed a lot of good." [Verse 4:19].

There is also a verse to guide women who fear mistreatment from their husbands… "If a woman fears cruelty or desertion from her husband, the couple shall try to reconcile their differences for conciliation is best for them." [Verse 4:128].

In line with the Quranic values, the correct translation of verse 4:34 should be:

*"*The men are the protectors and maintainers of women and God has endowed them with qualities that define their duty as providers. Therefore the admirable women will accede to this arrangement and protect what God commands them to preserve; their chastity, property and honour, even during their husband's absence. If you experience ill-conduct from your wife you shall first talk to her, then if she still continues in bad behaviour stop sharing the marital bed. If she still persists in impropriety then ***set forth*** for her in clear terms and say: either return to principles of integrity or our relationship is terminated. If she returns to decent behaviour and good conduct you are then not permitted to take any sanctions against her. Remember God is Most High and Supreme.*"* [Verse 4:34].

Feminism: is it a concept within Quranic values?

Feminism, from the Latin 'femina' at one time meant 'having the qualities of a woman'. These days it is a theory, a conviction or a movement to free women from cultural, social and political shackles placed on them, the feminists say, by the traditions and rules of their fathers. Patriarchy and modern feminism are the opposite ends of the same rod; choose whichever end you wish to beat yourself with. Both do nothing good for the cause of women and neither give women the dignity they deserve or the true position in society which is their right.

Feminists call for women to reject conventional family life and be career driven. However, no feminist claim can change the fact that it is women who bear children. Perhaps this is why we don't see many women who are construction workers, road diggers and soldiers. In reality only a minority of women have a suitable academic education, the skills, the inclination or the ambition for a full time and lifelong career. Many want to realise their intrinsic worth not only as individuals but also as female beings.

For humanity to move forward and not to become extinct, should it be necessary for pregnant women and women with small children to expose

themselves to the same hardships as men? Or should it not be the case that all people give women the respect and honour they deserve for sustaining such an important and meaningful role as wives and mothers?

For a woman to be a *woman* is an admirable quality. Women who opt to become career homemakers, wives and mothers perform a duty of great merit. To displace the roles of men and women creates discord, conflict and instability; a potential for constant fear and turmoil throughout society.

The Quran has always put women on an equal status with men, as far as *righteousness* is concerned, but clearly states the fact that they are *different* - and not without reason. Both men and women are required to cooperate as companions and not work against each other as competitors. They both have different roles in family and community life, and accordingly they each have duties and responsibilities particular to their gender. Apart from the obvious physical differences, there are psychological and physiological differences that determine their diverse and particular roles, and consequently division of labour in society. Men and women are therefore complimentary companions to each other and not competitors as is often wrongly portrayed. It is equity that leads to equality.

You shall not covet the intrinsic worth bestowed upon each individual by God; the men enjoy certain qualities and fruits of their labour and the women enjoy certain qualities and the fruits of their labour. You may implore God to shower you with His grace. God is fully aware of all things. [Verse 4:32]. See also footnote to verse 10:109.

While women are perfect by design for the role of wives and mothers, this is not to say that a woman cannot choose to drive a bus, manage a business or become a rocket scientist. However, it does mean that if she chooses to become a mother, then where possible, her child should not be deprived of the care and attention that *only* a mother can give.

There are many verses in the Quran that show the special status that women have. Their role does not restrict them in the way traditionally believed. Their dress code has probably become a defining factor, but like most things it has been ludicrously taken out of context and changed into something totally different from what the Quran portrays. Restrictions and disciplines placed on men and women are for the benefit of an ordered and progressive society. When restrictions are imposed, it is for the sole purpose of turning them to the best account. The self-imposed restrictions are not disparaging to an individual's status as a free being: freedom properly channelled is the necessary condition of human development, both individual and social.

Every individual should be themselves, and behaving in a masculine or feminine way particular to their gender is an integral part of that being.

WOMEN AND MEN: DRESS CODE & BEARDS

The Quran notes that women are admired for their beauty. Now since women are an obvious attraction, they are required to behave in public with additional care, decorum, good taste and propriety. But before we see what the requirements are of a woman's dress code, let us see what Quran says about the 'best of dresses':

"O children of Adam, We have provided you with garments to cover your bodies, as well as for luxury. But the best armour is the safeguarding of your own righteousness. These are some of God's signs so that you may take heed." [Verse 7:26].

The above verse says that the best dress is the garment of righteousness. Therefore the starting point for any dress sense is to have a virtuous cloak of good deeds. Both women and men should first safeguard their armour of righteousness, as without it they will be vulnerable. See verse 7:27.

Now how should a women dress? Verse 24:31 gives clear instruction on the dress code to be observed both in public and private. God guides us in the Quran:

"...And instruct the believing women to subdue their eyes and maintain their chastity. They shall not reveal any parts of their bodies, except that which is necessary. They shall cover their bosoms and shall not relax this mode in the presence of other than their husbands, their fathers, the fathers of their husbands, their sons, the sons of their husbands, their brothers, the sons of their brothers, the sons of their sisters, other women, the male servants and employees whose sexual drive has been nullified or the children who have not reached puberty. They shall not walk in a manner so wanton and attract attention to themselves. All of you shall turn to God and, O you who believe, that you may succeed. "[Verse 24:31].

Modest dress for women is described above. She is to cover herself sensibly in public, except those areas which are apparent. For example a shawl or a 'dupatta'; the simple length of material that is used by many Asian women to cover the head and upper part of their body.

"Our envoy, convey to your wives, your daughters and the women of the believers that when they go out they shall wrap around themselves their cloaks or shawls so that they may be recognised as righteous and modest women and avoid being stared at. God is Protector and the Most Merciful." [Verse 33:59].

Women are required to take additional care, dress modestly and not display their charms attracting unwanted attention when going about their business outside the home. This also means that their dress should be not so tight fitting that it accentuates the shape and features of their body or private parts. This also means that men's clothes should not be so tight as to outline the male organs, such as clothes worn during gym exercises etc.

"Women may relax and wear casual dress around their fathers, their sons, their brothers, the sons of their brothers, the sons of their sisters, and other women and their female servants. They shall keep their duty to God. God witnesses all things." [Verse: 33:55].

According to the Quran, the reason why muslim women should wear modest clothing and be sensibly covered when going out of their homes is

that they may be recognised as virtuous women and differentiated from women of a less moral character for whom unwanted attention is of no consequence, and even from prostitutes who use revealing clothes to display their wares and use sexual attraction as an advertisement to ply their trade.

Clothes, like uniforms, identify who we are and send messages of our intentions. Police and nurses uniforms tell us what we should expect from the people who wear them, in this case: protection and health care. Therefore, because of the special attraction women have, the clothes they wear should reflect their status and respectability in society. Righteous women want and need to be differentiated for very good reasons.

In the Quran the word *hijab* means curtain or barrier. Most people know it to mean a scarf-like head covering for women. This is the common use of the word 'hijaab' and is adopted from the Biblical teachings (Corinthians 1 11:15). The Quran does not suggest that women should be covered from head to toe in garments such as the *burka*, even veiled or kept apart from the world of men. On the contrary, the Quran is insistent on the full participation of women in society. Muslim women remained in mixed company with men until the late eleventh century. They received guests, held meetings and went to wars to help their fathers, brothers and husbands. They also defended their castles and bastions. It is part of the growing feeling on the part of some European Muslims that they no longer wish to identify with the West, and that reaffirmation of their identity as Muslims requires the kind of visible sign that adoption of conservative clothing implies. For these women the issue is not that they have to dress conservatively, but that they choose to do so.

In Iran, in the early 1980s, Imam Khomeini first insisted that women must wear the veil and *chador*. But in response to large demonstrations by women he modified his position and agreed that while the chador is not obligatory, modest dress is.

Morality of the Self and cleanliness of conscience are far better than the morality of the *purdah*. No goodness can come from pretence. Imposing the veil on women suggests that men suspect their mothers, sisters, wives and daughters of being potential traitors to them. How can Muslim men meet other women who are not veiled and treat them respectfully, and not accord the same respectful treatment to the women in their own community? To wear the hijaab or niqab is not an Islamic obligation on women and this can clearly be shown from the Quran.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, for example, is mentioned in the Quran as a pure woman and chosen as a role model above all women. There is no doubt from the Quran that she was a virtuous and righteous woman to deserve such a high accolade. In observing her behaviour as mentioned in

the Quran, we see that as she carries the young Jesus with her to her family and they immediately recognise her. Now had she been wearing a veil or a niqab, her family would not have identified her as quickly as they did. After all she had returned after a long absence. This reliably informs us that she was not covering her face, that she was not wearing a niqab. Mary's people recognising her quickly and with certainty plainly indicates that she was not wearing a niqab or any other covering to veil her face from being seen.

In the Quran there is further evidence which negates the practice of wearing the niqab. After God informed the messenger about the eligibility of marriage with certain relations, He continues:

"Beyond the categories described to you, you are not permitted to marry any other women nor can you substitute a new wife from the prohibited ones, no matter how much you desire them because of their beauty. You must be content with those already made lawful to you. God is watchful over all things." [Verse 33.52].

In this verse it is patently clear that Muhammad; the messenger, and other men, are also in a position to see the faces and beauty of women and this clearly establishes that women not related to him did not wear niqab or veils to cover their faces when they appeared in front of him, or indeed anyone else. Even today, in countries like Pakistan and India, muslim women do not generally wear the niqab or hijab. There has been much debate over the wearing of hijab and veil covering the full face, especially in European courts of law and other public places. There appears to be more difficulties in wearing a full veil or niqab as it creates a barrier. People need to be able to see faces when speaking to each other.

Traditional Jewish teachings promote the type of hijab (full-body garment exposing only eyes) that is worn today among some Eastern women. Do note that in the Quran we are also informed about some unbelievers who cover themselves up with garments: Can you identify these people?

"Indeed, they hide their innermost thoughts, as if to keep Him from knowing them. In fact even if they *cover themselves with their clothes*, He knows all their secrets and declarations. He is aware of their most innermost thoughts." [Verse 11:5], and Noah said "Whenever I invited them to be protected by You, they placed their fingers in their ears, *covered themselves with their clothes*, resisted and turned arrogant." [Verse 71:7].

From these verses it seems that it is the unbelievers who can be identified as those who cover themselves and not the believers.

Some sects prescribe certain forms of dress not only for their women but also for men. For example certain types of caps, turbans, loose fitting shirts, baggy pyjamas, jubas etc. labelling them as 'Islamic clothing'. Others insist that although trousers and western style suits may be worn, the trouser hem must rest above the ankle. Often these traditions are attributed to the messenger, and so considered a custom that must be followed out of reverence for him. This requirement is derived from the

6th. century Arabian culture in which it may have been essential to keep clothes off the muddy or dirty ground to keep them from soiling. However, these days in most cities it is unnecessary as the roads are paved and clean.

There is no clothing that can be termed as 'Islamic' or 'unIslamic'. The Quran does not promote any particular traditional or tribal clothing and allows freedom of dress in line with modesty that is decreed both for women and men.

Beards were, as they are now, common in times and cultures where they were fashionable or shaving was not a practical every day event. However, religious traditionalists today insist that to keep a beard is an act of piety that earns rewards and is a label of intent for Muslims so that they can be recognised as such. If this indeed was the case, then many native Americans, most Inuit in the Arctic and women would lose out on the virtues of keeping a beard as these groups of people do not have any androgenic hair. The Quran says all believing men and women are equal and it is only the acts of righteousness that define exalted characters. While they may add to your image, beards of any style, length or colour are therefore of no consequence in determining the sincerity or integrity of a muslim and are certainly not obligatory as an act of belief.

General behaviour

Finally there are lessons to be learned from the advice given to the messenger's wives: "O wives of the messenger, you are not the same as any other women; observe righteousness as you have a greater responsibility. Therefore, you shall be cautious and not speak too tenderly lest he in whose heart is a delusion, may develop mistaken desires; you shall speak only righteousness. You shall make your homes your foundation and do not return to the permissiveness and ignorance of earlier people. You shall observe your commitments and keep them pure and fulfil your duty to God and obey His messenger. God wishes to remove all impurity of the beliefs in your own ways and to purify you completely." [Verses 33:32-33].

This exemplifies how believing women should conduct themselves in the company of men. Yet, it is important to note that while meetings between men and women are not forbidden there are some necessary restrictions. It is impossible for most men and women in their everyday lives to speak from behind a separating curtain or barrier. However, there can be unseen barriers that help impede bad behaviour. It is important therefore, to engage with each other, especially those with whom marriage, and by implication sex, is not forbidden, in a reserved manner, not flirtatious, evocative or in any way that may be mistaken or misconstrued.

Also all women are encouraged to make their home the foundations of their life and are also encouraged to become homemakers. This does not preclude or prohibit them from having a career, but the priorities of a family life must come first.

HOMOSEXUALITY AND INCEST

History shows that homosexuality has always been around, so it is not a new phenomenon. But generally people have been apprehensive of, if not hostile to homosexuality. It is fashionable now for people from all walks of life to be open about their sexuality, but previously homosexuality was openly prevalent only amongst entertainers, actors, singers and other attention-seekers or those who paid no regard to social norms.

As far as the law is concerned, morality is not a permanent value but something that is changeable. For example, in England and Wales, the Sexual Offences Act 1967 decriminalised homosexual acts in private between two men over the age of 21. The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1980 provided the same freedom in Scotland. This attempt to liberalise the law was largely due to the increasing prosecution of homosexual men. The death penalty for homosexuals in Wales was only lifted in 1917. The Wolfenden Report (1957) was the findings of the Wolfenden Committee who came to the conclusion that criminal law could not credibly intervene in the private sexual affairs of consenting adults in the privacy of their homes.

Whether homosexuality is a case of nature over nurture will always remain an open debate as there is no conclusive proof that there is a 'gay gene', showing homosexuality as ingrained sexuality or as a sexual preference as opposed to sexual orientation. To find homosexuality's place in society we really have to look at a much more subtle aspect of evolution and the benefits of sex to social advancement. The underlying feature of such an enquiry must be based on Permanent Values that push the social procession forward and the part sex plays in this evolutionary mechanism. Before, homosexuals had much to fear (even now most countries outlaw acts of sodomy, or buggery as it is sometimes referred to) but in the politically correct world it is homophobia that is wicked. However, neither position needs to be as polarised or criticised so intensely.

The only goal worthy of human beings is Self-development. It means the full unfolding of the Self and the actualising of all its potentialities. The aim of the moral endeavour is to move nearer to this goal. To be realised, the latent excellence needs a proper environment that only a society based on Permanent Values can bring about. All good actions lead to the development of the Self and all bad actions hamper and impede the process of Self-development. This is the criterion by which we can judge the worth of our actions. Does homosexuality progress or regress our Self-development and by consequence create a better or worse society for all of us?

The theory of evolution accepts that the competition is to survive and live forever. Plants do this by ensuring that the most widespread pollination takes place and their seeds are dispersed as pollination extensively as

possible by animals, insects and winds. The environment does the rest. For some in the animal kingdom, survival is ensured by having a great many young, and also by adapting to the changing conditions. Humans, too, live through their children and seek partners to ensure that their kind have the best chances of continued existence. How does homosexuality contribute to this endeavour?

It can be argued that in this day and age it is not necessary for everyone to produce children. Yes, it's true. There are millions of orphans that need to be looked after but for this we all have a responsibility to adopt or at least foster those children in need. But we do not need to be homosexual to take part in this effort.

Under normal circumstances it takes a man and a woman to produce a child, and for its physical and mental wellbeing it proves better to have *both* a *father* and a *mother* who care for it as it grows to maturity. For example, breastfeeding has many health advantages for both the mother and her child. Family structure studies based on large numbers taking into account the full range of socio-economic groups find that children with married heterosexual parents succeed far better than those living with same-sex partners. Smaller studies of white, well educated, wealthy gay and lesbian guardians and their adopted children just cannot reveal the full picture. It's apparent that unless there are circumstances where children cannot live with their parents, the best place is with their parents and not with anyone else.

It was the Wolfenden Committee that concluded criminal law could not credibly intervene in the private sexual affairs of consenting adults in the privacy of their own homes. If this is the case, does this apply *only* to homosexual acts? Is it not then wrong for criminal law to interfere in *any* private sexual affairs of consenting adults in the privacy of their home? What about sex between father and son, mother and son, siblings or even grandparent and grandchild? Should we now move to change the law in favour of incestuous relationships between *all* consenting adults?

Cleopatra's first marriage was to her brother, and she too was the result of a brother/sister marriage. Is this a good option of how society should produce offspring and prosper? If not, where then do we draw the line? Even in free liberal democratic societies there are some things that still do not attract popular appeal. Whether the state law permits or forbids some sexual act, or even if a society accepts something previously outlawed, it does not make it right or morally correct. As with homosexuality, while sexual attraction to a close blood relative cannot be controlled, incest, the sexual act is forbidden.

If homosexual acts are a right of consenting adults then by extension, any sexual act by consenting adults, including incestuous sex, should also be a

right. However, both are detrimental to the welfare and progress of society, and therefore the Quran deems them to be criminal.

A Permanent Law is something which is applicable irrespective of society or lawmakers' wishes. The Permanent Law's only concern is to create an environment, a society where the Self can grow and develop and realise its full potential. This means discipline and restraint to bring out the best in an individual's personality. Just as a civilised adult male lusting after a pre-pubescent child bridles himself, so must an adult contain his or her passion for a lesbian, gay man or an incestuous act of sexual gratification.

God decrees that the act of having sex with a same-sex partner is the result of a choice. It is inconceivable that God made people homosexuals then declared it a crime and proscribed it. To accept such a proposition is to accept that God is unjust.

Inclinations can exist within humans for a variety of natural and unnatural acts, from heberphilia to fornication and rape, and from necrophilia to bestiality. In fact, in Germany, Denmark and Norway, people can legally pay to have sex with animals. In Germany, the 1969 law banning sex with animals was repealed and the Animal Protection Law was introduced, but it failed to include a specific ban on zoophilia which meant that it is perfectly legal to have sex with horses and other animals. Visitors to these 'Barnyard Brothels' term it as a 'lifestyle' choice. Most people will find this repulsive but for some it is acceptable and just a matter of preference.

Such inclinations may come from peer-group suggestions or even from social fashions of the day. Human beings are not like robots who only do what they are programmed to do. Humans choose and God holds them responsible for their choices. Were homosexuality a product of genetic destiny, it would be unfair for God to criminalise those who practice it. Currently, some people are even claiming that murder is of genetic origin. To accept that would mean to excuse murderers and tolerate them.

In the West, today, homosexuality and lesbianism have both been dubbed alternative lifestyles. Where homosexuality was once considered a crime, and even an illness, it is now homophobia that is frowned upon in western countries. Consequently, Islam and muslims are considered intolerant and narrow-minded due to their opposition to homosexuality.

The Quran establishes the guidelines on how a society should live – guidelines for all time through Permanent Values. The scope of the Quran could not be greater. It contains rules that will be productive to any society. The Quran does not censure homosexuals, but condemns the sexual act of same-sex partners as a perverse and unnatural act. The Quran objects to the homosexual act on the basis that it is unproductive and does not

complete our biological functions and therefore does not add value to life. Every society requires the new life that a heterosexual marriage is expected to produce. Otherwise a society will become unbalanced and extinct. This is why a productive heterosexual relationship is endorsed. The Quran says that marriage must take place between a man and a woman. Therefore, the Deen-Islam: the social order, is not in accord with homosexual relationships or a homosexual couple raising a child. However, the Quran does not demonise homosexuals, but condemns the sexual act. Those who have no interest in a heterosexual relationship are not banished from society, neither are they forced to conform nor forced into marrying a member of the opposite sex. Indeed, the requirements for marriage stated in the Quran would forbid this. In line with proper sexual conduct God also forbids incestuous relationships.

If there is no decree in the Quran to kill those who practice homosexuality why then was Lot's community annihilated? First of all it should be noted that these licentious people had gone beyond all bounds of morality and transgression. Their behaviour was decadent and regressive to society as a whole. The history of Lot's people is about depraved people seeking to satisfy such dissipated lusts and are thus condemned by God. This event describes people who are aggressive in their will to commit this atrocious crime - the intent was violent anal rape, Lot's visitors did not invite them for casual sex (even that would have been abhorrent) - and therefore their actions warrant destruction.

So provided that society is not corrupted by such actions, the balance that the Quran recommends is to promote heterosexual relationships without alienating homosexuals, hermaphrodites, transgender and discriminating people on the basis of their sexual orientation. [1059]

[1059] http://www.frc.org/whats-wrong-with-letting-same-sex-couples-marry

FOOD: HALAL AND HARAM

Halal: permitted - Haram: restricted

We all love food. No matter how absorbed we may be in our work and play, we have to stop and eat. Religions generally forbid certain foods; such as the Hindu will not eat beef because he worships the cow. Muslims, however have much more freedom in their choice of food than is generally believed. There are some restrictions, but these are only sensible precautions and nothing to do with mindless beliefs. For the muslim, the rule is that if it's not forbidden in the Quran, then God has seen fit to give people the freedom to make their own decision.

Arabs are not overly concerned about food issues, but Muslims from the Indian subcontinent seem to be obsessed with *halal*. The word halal means 'permissible' and in the culinary context conveys anything that is permitted as food according to the Quran, the book all muslims believe to be the criterion revealed by God. It should be noted that the Quran does not list *halal* items, instead it forbids (decrees as 'haram') only four types of food: animals that die of themselves, running blood, the meat of pigs or anything consecrated to other than God. If one is driven out of necessity, not willing transgression, then any of these can be consumed. It is generally assumed that an animal has to be ritually slaughtered before it becomes *halal*, but this is a tradition and not mentioned in the Quran.

Traditional Muslims would be repulsed at meat from an animal that was not slaughtered in a manner they believe to be prescribed by their religion. A lifetime of indoctrination has embedded a psychological fear of touching or eating such meats. However, their mistaken beliefs have no basis in the Quran.

We can understand the concerns of the sincere yet credulous, but there are many unscrupulous people who may do other explicitly forbidden (*haram*) things without batting an eyelid, yet would appear shocked at a muslim eating a Big Mac. With their double standards and sanctimonious appearances they look down on others who eat food other than the one they class as halal or permitted.

Nevertheless, for muslims, the Quran is the only criterion. God said that he has left nothing out of the Quran, so all our information must come from it and not any other source. [Verses 6:38; 6:114].

As far as food is concerned, to list all permissible things would be very lengthy, so instead God has listed things that are restricted. The word God uses for forbidden or restricted is 'haram'. Anything that is not haram is permissible - or *halal* in Arabic.

"Say: 'Did you note how God sends down to you all kinds of provisions, then you render some of them unlawful and some lawful?' Say: 'Did God give you permission to do this? Or do you fabricate lies and attribute them to God?'" [Verse 10:59].

This verse from the Quran warns against forbidding things which God has not and those who fabricate prohibitions do wrong not only against themselves, but also against the people they lead astray. This includes those who gain financially from the 'halal food industry': butchers, suppliers, retailers and middlemen.

"Were you witnesses when God decreed such prohibitions for you? Who is more evil than those who invent such lies and attribute them to God? They thus mislead the people without knowledge. God does not guide such evil people." [Verse 6:144].

Note that this is also a warning: be well informed, and you will not be hoodwinked. God warns: "You shall not invent rules according to your own opinions stating: 'This is lawful and this is unlawful,' and fabricate doctrine and attribute it to God. Surely, those who fabricate lies and attribute them to God will never succeed." [Verse 16:116].

Without proof, no-one has authority to classify a food as forbidden. This right is reserved for God alone. To accept another person's ruling (such as a religious decree) would be committing 'shirk' which means to assign equal authority to someone along with God, a monstrous transgression.

As mentioned before, the haram list is quite short: "Restricted for you are animals that die of themselves, excess blood, the meat of pigs and any food dedicated to other than God. Animals that die of themselves include those strangled, struck with an object, fallen from a height, gored, attacked by a wild animal, unless rescued before death, and animals sacrificed for or dedicated to those other than God." There is, however, a concluding provision: "If one is forced by circumstances to eat restricted food, without deliberate or willing transgression, then God is Protector, Most Merciful." [Verse: 5:3].

God reiterates this and commands His messenger to say: " 'I do not find in the guidance given to me any food that is restricted for any eater except: carrion; animals that die of themselves, excess blood, the meat of pigs and any food consecrated in a name other than God's'. If one is compelled to eat these, without deliberate or willing transgression, then your Sustainer is Protector, Most Merciful." [Verse 6:145].

As stated in Verse 6:119, God has *detailed* everything that is haram. No other authority can add to this list. These injunctions from God are as valid today just as they were on the day they were revealed. It is quite common for many people to dedicate food (both meat and other consumables) to saints, and to mention Muhammad's name conjoined with God while slaughtering an animal. Both of these practices are against the Quranic injunction that forbids food consecrated in a name other than God's.

Now, let's look at what is halal. "They consult you concerning what is permitted for them; say 'Lawful for you are all good things including what your trained dogs and falcons catch for you.' You train them according to God's teachings. You may eat what they catch for you and mention God's name thereupon. You shall observe God's law. God is most efficient in reckoning." [Verse 5:4]. "All water game is made lawful for you to eat." [Verse 5:96]. "O people, eat from all that is lawful and good." [Verse 2:168]. "Do not eat from that upon which the name of God has not been mentioned, for it is an abomination." [Verse 6:121].

While the above verses capture the essence of all that is permitted, there are some points which need to be elaborated. God, in His infinite wisdom,

has given people the freedom to choose. That is why the Quran says: "O you who believe, eat from the good things We provided for you and be thankful to God if you do serve Him alone." [Verse 2:172].

We should be appreciative to God for providing us with an amazing diversity of things to eat. We can eat from all that is *lawful* and *good*. This would include *everything* not in the haram category of verses 5:3 and 6:145. But what about deciding what is good? This would depend on what is available. You can eat *anything* that you think is good, so long as you stay within the limits given in the Quran.

Haram foods are listed in verses 5:3, 6:121, and 6:145. The verses which give details of *halal* foods are 5:4, 5:96, and 2:168. From these verses it can be concluded that there are three conditions for something to be *halal*:

1. It has to be lawful according to the Quran and the Quran alone. This means that it should not be in the haram category. Therefore *anything* that is not in this list is halal. However, this does not mean that it is mandatory to eat everything in this list. What we eat should be appealing and lawful. This flexibility allows people of different regions to eat according to availability and taste.

2. God's name has to be mentioned before eating. This is generally accepted, except when meat is in question. The misconception is that a 'mantra' also has to be said at time of slaughter, but there is no mention of this in the Quran. When you see how impractical this is, you realise why God has not made it a pre-condition. Unless you slaughter the animal yourself you could *never* be absolutely sure that this ritual has been carried out and in reality it's impossible to know. Can anyone seriously imagine this taking place in a modern commercial abattoir where hundreds of animals are slaughtered each hour? Anyone who is familiar with the meat industry knows this. In verse 5:3 God says that he has perfected his Deen, and verse 5:5 says that the food of those given previous guidance is permitted for you. Did they change their practice of the slaughter ritual when this verse was revealed?

However, there is one exception. When an animal is offered as a sacrifice (the meat to be mainly distributed to the needy as part of Social Welfare actions), as part of 'shariallah' (God's decree), then God's name must be mentioned *while the animal is prepared and ready for slaughter* - not dead or being slaughtered. [Verse 22:36]. Under normal circumstances, God does not require His name to be mentioned *at time of slaughter* but Muslims must not eat food without mentioning His name. This we can do, because the responsibility lies with us at time of eating.

3. It has to be good. What is good? This decision is left entirely to the individual. Different people find different things good. What one person considers a delicacy, the other may feel appalled by. This applies not just to

sheep's brain, or ox tongue. Some people enjoy locusts and grasshoppers. Others like frog legs in garlic sauce. The Amazonians eat capybara, and the desert dwellers yearn for roast lizard. Aboriginals have been eating squirrels and monkeys for centuries. All are good for people who eat them, and they are all *halal.* As long as it is not forbidden in the Quran, anything that you consider good can be eaten.

The Quran is good news for the believers because it removes the shackles of mental bondage that enslaves people to beliefs without foundation. The Quran warns those who refuse to apply their common sense. Only the corrupt and the ignorant insist on slaughter rituals.

Many people working in the 'halal food' industry rely on the perpetuation of the 'religious' doctrine. This is now a multi-billion pound industry. For people to accept that they can buy meat from any supermarket would diminish the 'halal food' business; instead, this information is suppressed. The Quran says: "Those who conceal God's revelations in this scripture, in exchange for a cheap material gain, consume fire into their bellies." [Verse 2:174].

They follow authorities who decree for them laws in their Deen that were never authorised by God. If it were not for a decision consistent with His ordinance, they would have been judged immediately. Indeed, the transgressors have incurred a painful retribution. [Verse 42:21]

For the masses, rituals (such as eating *halal*) are a show of piety and kinship. Following the Quran means discarding their inherited beliefs and can mean isolation from their families and friends. "When they are told, 'Follow God's guidance as revealed in this book,' they say, 'We follow only what we found our parents doing'. What if their parents do not appreciate this and are not guided?" [Verse 2:170].

God's bounties are countless. He wills no hardship, that's why His restrictions are few and make good sense: "O you who believe, do not prohibit good things that are made lawful by God and do not aggress; God dislikes the aggressors." [Verse 5:87].

God also says: "You commit nothing wrong by eating together in groups or as individuals." [Verse 24:61]. The same verse details the homes of family members you can eat from, without feeling that you are imposing on them. Such is the wisdom of God, most gracious. He gives us the details wherever He deems fit.

Is it not significant that he has *not* detailed any slaughter ritual? Had God wanted, could He not have done so? Forgetfulness is certainly not one of God's attributes. Accepting God's decrees in the Quran is submitting to His laws. Those who do that don't just *profess* to be muslims but *are* muslims.

DRINK AND DRUGS

A common misconception is that muslims are not permitted to touch alcohol, but the truth behind it is very different. To say that alcohol cannot be used on the basis that the Quran forbids it is wrong.

These commonly held beliefs are purely traditional and based on customary jurisprudence - but have no foundation in Quranic prohibitions.

The first point to note is that the Quran is the final authority for muslims and the source of all Islamic law. This is confirmed in verse 6:114: "Shall I seek other than God as the authority of law, when He has revealed to you this book fully detailed?" And also 5.44, which says: "Those who do not rule in accordance with God's guidance are disbelievers."

To understand this, the key words to note are 'forbidden' and 'alcohol'. The word 'alcohol' is not in the Quran. The word used is '*khamar*' which means intoxicant. This includes alcohol, but can mean any substance such as a drug or depressant that alters a person's state of mind or body. The Quran says about *khamar*: "...there is gross harm and some benefits for all people. But their potential to cause harm is greater than their benefit." [Verse 2:219]. The good is obviously in its sensible use for medical purposes and the harm is from abuse of an otherwise useful substance.

The word 'forbidden' (Arabic: *haram*) is never applied for *khamar* in the Quran. If it was, then drugs such as morphine and preparations which contain alcohol can also not be used. However, the Quran strongly advises only against the abuse of *khamar.* Considering that its abuse can cause great harm, this guidance is necessary. But this is not prescriptive or law - it's only guidance. Had God wanted to prohibit *khamar,* or even specifically *alcohol,* could He not have done so? Then surely God would have used the word *haram* which means to forbid, as He has done elsewhere, for example verses 6:145 and 7:33. The words *khamar* and *alcohol* are both Arabic, words which God surely knows. We know from verse 20:52 that God does not forget or make mistakes. Had God explicitly wanted to forbid or restrict *alcohol,* He would have done so directly and without beating about the bush, as some people imply.

Looking back in history, it was the muslims who introduced vineyards and wine into Sicily and while not a significant force in the wine market today, as recently as the 1950s Algeria exported more wine than France, Italy and Spain put together. Even now, Tunisa and other Muslim North African countries produce a popular range of wines sold around the world.

Wine and oil in plenty are signs of a flourishing community. As a mark of prosperity God's messenger Joseph announced that in his Misr oil and wine will flow. It is apparent that people in Joseph's time enjoyed drinking wine and it was not forbidden. Some descriptions in the Quran of a heavenly life

are of course allegorical illustrations. What exactly will the superlative pleasures be, we don't really know, but metaphorical descriptions of pleasures mean that it is a comparison with something already known in this life. Among the delights in heaven are intoxicating drinks *(khamr)*, if intoxicating drinks are forbidden in this life, then how can the metaphor be an encouraging aspiration? In verse 4:43 believers are instructed not to go about their daily tasks while inebriated. Why would this be necessary if intoxicants are forbidden? Furthermore, the Quran says that this is the same Deen as before and that God's way does not change, therefore we must accept that no gradual changes were made, concluding in the prohibition of intoxicants .[1060]

Along with other Muslim countries such as Egypt, Turkey and Malaysia, Pakistan also produces alcoholic beverages; mainly beer and spirits for local consumption. Established in 1860, The Murree Brewing Company, now one of the top companies in Pakistan, produces world class prize-winning whisky. It's also no secret that many of the elite from these and other Muslim countries are no teetotallers.

In the late 1970's, the largest wholesale supplier of alcoholic beverages in Scotland was a Muslim, and this trade continues to be plied by Muslims throughout the United Kingdom. There are hundreds, if not thousands of Muslim retailers who earn or have earned their living selling alcohol as part of their business. Many of the mosques in Britain were built partly with money from alcohol sales, with donations of money provided by Muslim shopkeepers and restaurateurs. Imams from local mosques continue to accept and indeed encourage donations from local businessmen who deal in alcohol, money which now provides, as it has always done, their wages and the upkeep of the mosques they administer. While they publicly condemn alcohol, they continue to benefit from it indirectly and surreptitiously. Indeed it is going to be a struggle to stop Muslim shopkeepers from selling alcohol or contributing their money to local mosques. Without a doubt, as the Quran says, there is harm in *khamar,* but would it not be better to be realistic and accept the that the Quran does not make alcohol *haram* than to be hypocritical about its everyday use?

Finally, a verse from the Quran: *"Say: 'Do you note how God sends down to you all kinds of provisions, then you render some of them unlawful and some lawful?' Say: "Did God give you permission to do this? Or, do you fabricate lies and attribute them to God?' "* [Verse 10:59].

[1060] **Intoxicants:** (Arabic: *khamr*). See verses and footnotes 2:219; 4:43; 5:90; 12:36; 12:41; 12:49; 16:67; 47:15. See verses 33:62; 42:13; 46:9.

SAWM - THE SELF-RESTRAINT

Fasting means to abstain from eating and drinking all or certain foods, especially as a religious observance**.** Cruden's remarks in his Bible Concordance, that fasting in all nations was resorted to in times of mourning, sorrow and affliction are borne out by historical events.

Among the Jews fasting was observed as a sign of grief or mourning. David is mentioned as fasting for seven days during the illness of his infant son (II Sam. 12:16,18.) and as a sign of mourning, fasting is mentioned in I Sam 31:13 and elsewhere. As well as this, the Day of Atonement, which was prescribed by the Mosaic Law as a day of fasting (Lev.16:29), required people to afflict their souls while a priest made an atonement for them to cleanse them of their sins. The notion that fasting was an act of penitence seems to have developed from this.

However, Moses' fast was said to be preparatory to receiving a revelation. Christ's words in the Bible that his disciples would fast more often when he was taken away from their midst only lends support to the Jewish conception of the fast as connected with national grief or mourning. Christianity did not introduce any new meaning to the fast.

It was in the traditional religion of Muslims that the practice developed a new significance. It rejected the idea of appeasing divine wrath or exciting divine compassion and introduced regular obligatory fasting during the month of Ramadan in the Al-Hijri calendar. Fasting here is made into a spiritual, moral and physical discipline by changing both its form and motive. By making the institution permanent, all ideas of distress, affliction and sin are dissociated from it.

However, contrary to popular practice, ritual fasting is *not* prescribed in the Quran. 'Sawm', the word mistranslated as fasting is in fact *Self-discipline* in harmony with Quranic values. The traditional meaning of sawm is thus at odds with that of the Quran. It can certainly mean abstinence from food, drinking and eating - but not exclusively so.

This divergence can be shown through the errors in interpreting the Quran. For example, in the story of Mary, after she has given birth to her son Jesus, the traditional translation of verse 19:26 by Abdullah Yusuf Ali reads:

"So eat and drink and cool (thine) eye. And if thou dost see any man, say, 'I have vowed a fast to (Allah) Most Gracious, and this day will I enter into no talk with any human being'".

Here 'sawm' is translated incorrectly as 'fast', rather than in reference to Mary's vow of silence. The correct exposition of the verse is:

"She ate the dates and drank the water and was consoled. When she met anyone, she signified her self-discipline and abstinence from speaking; that she had made a vow of silence to the One Most Gracious; and did not talk to anyone about the event of that day." [Verse 19:26].

If sawm meant fasting (abstinence from food and drink), then Mary would be eating and drinking, and then deceptively pledging to have fasted: which is hardly an act of a righteous woman. Would a lactating mother abstain from eating and drinking to the detriment of her child? This would not be a wise choice, and surely God would not decree such a punishment on a woman he exalts and then extend it to her innocent newborn child.

Properly understood, sawm here means the discipline of silence, and in the context of the above verse, it means abstaining from speaking about a specific matter. Sawm can mean fasting but attaching *only* this meaning gives the wrong impression that sawm means ritual fasting or fasting alone, when in fact it means more than that.

During Ramadan, the ninth month of the traditional Islamic lunar calendar, Muslims will not eat or drink from daybreak to sunset. This also includes abstaining from chewing gum, drinking and even smoking. While this practice claims to be an important religious sacrament, its motives and outcomes prove it is less so; flying both in the face of morality and science.

For example, nutritionists explain the biological process of fasting as using up your body's energy reserves. During the summer, after 12 hours of fasting, people may feel a headache, light-headed and lethargic. Research also links fasting with changes in mood, such as increased irritability.

Furthermore, studies into athletes who fasted during Ramadan have discovered that performance deteriorates as the month goes on. This is due to disturbed sleeping cycles, dehydration and the new pattern of eating. This runs counter to the popular assumption that fasting over a lengthy period brings health benefits.

However, there may be slight benefits to long term fasting, such as improving concentration by disturbing your natural routine. According to some this helps those who fast short-term to think more clearly. Despite this, there are many reasons that long-term fasting is both illogical and counterproductive to its aims.

One of the reasons for the month-long fast is to tighten the purse strings and be more economical. Yet, according to dieticians, binge-eating means that typically people eat richer food, and more of it in one month than they would normally eat in that period. How can it be claimed to be a more economically efficient month when there is rampant overspending?

Additionally, retailers increase their prices to take advantage of the surge of this sanctimonious euphoria. By doing so, they are acting against Quranic values by profiteering and by raking in money in times when many cannot even afford to maintain their basic needs.

Furthermore, this fasting ritual is intended by the pious to share the pain felt by the poor. If they increase their expenditure to indulge during the

hours of darkness, and sleep when most of the poor are working, how can they claim to be feeling the pain of those who have little or nothing?

In fact the overspending during Ramadan means the poor, who are the majority in most Muslim countries, are priced out of everyday necessities due to the subsequent rise in the cost of food. Rather than bringing the well-off closer to the poor, the traditional practice of fasting has the effect of furthering the suffering of those in need.

During this month, Muslim charities have a field day too. The push for donations increases as many will feel an obligation to give. Charities undoubtedly take advantage of this, and yet even with more than a billion people feeling extra generous, this doesn't seem to have resolved the problem of poverty in any Muslim country.

There are those who believe that the time of Ramadan itself is a time of salvation. This includes the fallacy that God keeps Satan chained during the month, curtailing any misdeeds from Muslims. The assumption that one month of the year leads to increased piety in one's life is simply untrue. Where corruption and transgression exist, it continues unabated regardless of whether the month is considered holy or not.

Lastly, there remains the issue of national productivity. It cannot be denied that Muslim countries suffer decreased productivity due to their inhabitants having reduced energy levels. This means that Muslims will work shorter days, and many businesses also suffer as a result.

Thus the positive psychological effects of fasting are heavily outweighed by its negative impact on health, the economy and the needy, as well as further perpetuating misconceptions about Deen-Islam. Ritual fasting is simply another detrimental facet of 'religion'.[1061]

[1061] *The Quran was revealed in an intense period to provide guidance for all people, with clear teachings in this statute book as the criterion. Those of you who witness such times shall undertake Self-discipline. Those who are ill or on unavoidable duties may substitute the same number of other days. God wishes for you convenience, not hardship, that you may fulfil your obligations and to exalt God for guiding you and to express your appreciation.* [Verse 2:185].

This is the verse traditionally said to decree fasting: the ritual abstinence of food and drink during the month of *Ramadhan* in the traditional religious calendar. However, when properly understood, *sawm* means undertaking a Self-discipline or Self-restraint in a manner similar to that which Mary undertook after the birth of her son, Jesus. [Verse 19:26]. The word *ramadhan* means intense or scorching heat. To name a month *'Ramadhan'* (meaning intense or hot) in a lunar calendar where the months rotate can be confusing and to alternate the months in this manner is also forbidden in the Quran. [Verse 9:37]. **Intense/hot** (Arabic: *ramadhan.* Root: R'M'Z). According to Lane's Lexicon it signifies intense heat. From this it can be seen that it means a volatile state of affairs: an intense period. Witnessing a MONTH does not make much sense. It is when you witness a situation, particularly an extreme one, that you need *sawm*, Self-discipline; the measures that we need to take, so as to extract ourselves from such a condition. Extreme circumstances call for extreme measures. Indeed, the guidance; the Quran was revealed during such a period of intense fear and turmoil.

HYPOCRITE: THE SELFISH INDIVIDUAL
KAFIR: THE DISBELIEVER

The Arabic word '*munafiq*' is translated as hypocrite simply because of the lack of a more appropriate word. There is no single word in the English language that comes close to its proper meaning.

The human body survives by taking air, food drink etc. By its very nature the human being is greedy, selfish, gluttonous and avaricious. It not only takes what it needs, it also hoards.

The Self fights an ongoing battle in its desire to be munificent and realise its potential by developing itself; it seeks to be benevolent, philanthropic, generous, giving and eager to self-sacrifice.

The hypocrites feign these highly desirable qualities and attitudes that receive great approval, while in their private life such opinions belie their public statements. It is these people who are *munafiq*, those that are stingy and grudging when it comes to self-sacrifice and *expending* their Self for the good of others. The *munafiq* holds back in everything except that which is in their self-interest. See verse and footnote 2:8.

The disbeliever, (Arabic: *kafir*) is the one who not only openly denies and rejects the truth but conceals it, perhaps preventing others from its benefit. What then exactly does the *kafir* disbelieve in?

First and foremost it is a denial of God, His sovereignty and ultimate accountability to Him. By denying God's sovereignty, the *kafir* is setting up an authority other than God. It may be another individual, a religion or some system other than God's Deen-Islam. It may even be his own ego.

By rejecting accountability to God, the *kafir* rejects responsibility for his own actions. If he does not accept responsibility and accountability to God, then who does he concede to, if not to another authority?

As a consequence of rejecting God, the *kafir* also rejects the Quran's guidance and the Permanent Values it contains. He may say that he still believes in justice, equality and kindness to his fellow humans and is against all the bad things that happen in the world, but what worth is a good deed if its full and absolute value is not realised?

The Quran tells us that each human being has immense latent potential and by implementing the optimum values, the Permanent Values underpinned by accountability, the human being can raise his status and make his Self fit for the next stage in life.

The *kafir* in actual fact denies the very purpose and meaning of his life; the impending exaltation of his very being and the ability to raise the measure of his own being by his *own* endeavour. See verses 109:1-6.

SHIRK: AN ACT OF TREASON

Shirk: to set up or accept an authority equal or to rival God;
to make or accept laws, decrees or doctrines as equal to the Quran.
Mushrik (singular), mushrikeen (plural): those who commit shirk.

God is the One who created and directed the laws of the universe, and He is sustainer of the heavens and the earth and all that is between. He is the sovereign and needs no partner or ally in His domain. He is over and above all that they ascribe to Him and ultimately all will be held accountable to Him.

Once this statement has been accepted, it becomes insupportable to accept any other authority as equal or to rival God. Of course, this does not mean that there can be no other authority besides Him; we need governments and administrators to implement and enforce the laws and values that God has given us. Also, we need legislators to make by-laws, within the parameters of the Quranic injunctions, to suit the needs and situations of the time.

While sovereignty of nations can be, and is often, shared, as in the United Nations, European Union etc. and in dealings amongst such organisations, and under other situations that require cooperation. However, God's sovereignty cannot be shared under any circumstances.[1062] We therefore should not assent to or accept any laws that conflict with Quranic decrees as given by God, the Sovereign lawmaker. Should we do this, then we would commit shirk: high treason; the unforgivable offence. Not only this, the Quran states that mushrikeen who actively fight against muslims and Deen-Islam should be killed. Why is this?

Are mushrikeen idol worshippers?

First we need to understand the meaning of 'mushrik'. To translate the word 'mushrikeen' (plural of mushrik) as idol-worshippers or polytheists is like calling a gang of marauding Vikings a group of beach revellers. A mushrik is a person who commits 'shirk', the act of giving someone (or a body) authority to equal or to compete with God. This also means obeying the laws and values that conflict with the laws of God as enshrined in the Quran. People generally label polytheists, idolaters or pagans as mushrikeen, but this is not entirely correct. Anyone who accepts any law or value that is in conflict with God's law is a mushrik, such as those who give equal authority to others as God which is the same as associating partners with God. Also those who accept others as lawgivers; those who attempt to

[1062] **Some people** erroneously consider man as 'God's representative on Earth' - see verse and footnote 2:30.

seize a share in God's sovereignty such as legislators, leaders, priests etc. who make laws in contradiction to God's laws are mushrikeen. In fact, any person who threatens the peace and security of muslims, is a mushrik. A mushrik is an active enemy, a traitor, and a person who commits high treason. And what happened to such traitors in Britain?

Under the law of the United Kingdom, high treason is the crime of disloyalty to the crown. Offences constituting high treason include plotting the murder of the sovereign; committing adultery with the sovereign's consort, with the sovereign's eldest unmarried daughter, or with the wife of the heir to the throne; levying war against the sovereign and adhering to the sovereign's enemies, giving them aid or comfort; and attempting to undermine the lawfully established line of succession. Several other crimes have historically been categorised as high treason, including counterfeiting money and being a Catholic priest. High treason is today often referred to simply as treason. Considered to be the most serious of offences, high treason was often met with extraordinary punishment, because it threatened the security of the state. Hanging, drawing and quartering was often employed. The last treason trial was that of William Joyce, who was executed in 1946.

Traitors may no longer be hanged, but 1946 was not exactly a million years ago. In fact, it's recent history. Under English law even someone having sex with the King's wife or the wife of the heir was considered to be treason and could be killed. Giving help of any sort to the enemy of the Crown is treason; giving them comfort is treason; being a Catholic priest was treasonous - and treason was punishable by death: being hanged, drawn and quartered. So why is it considered strange when the Quran advocates that people *actively* fighting against the muslims, those threatening their peace and security, should be killed? Why is it thought too brutal when muslims are commanded to kill traitors (the mushrikeen) acting against God and His just laws?

Even today English law does not require its leaders to wait for an attack before retaliating. In fact, controversially in September 2015, British Prime Minister David Cameron authorised the killing of two British men in Syria who the government believed were a threat to the United Kingdom. All this was carried out without any due legal process.

Also in 1985, in Philadelphia USA, the police (presumably with government authorisation) bombed a house inhabited by an African American liberation group. They destroyed the area devastating the lives of 250 people, killing 11, including 5 children. All because they were believed to be a threat. What threat the children could have posed is still an unanswered question.

Every community and every nation defends itself against those who threaten their way of life, but it is in the Quran that aggression is forbidden and justice advocated.[1063]

[1063] **When interviewed** by Emily Maitlis on BBC's Newsnight and talking about the insurgent group ISIS. Gen John Allen said: 'We should attack ISIS wherever we find it'. General John Allen, was a

The exposition of verses 9:5-6 gives a clear picture of the position that should be taken in order to bring about peace and security:

"Once the restricted months of the treaty are over and the mushrikeen still refuse to make peace, you may slay them wherever you encounter them; overcome and punish them and watch them carefully at every place. If they repent and observe their agreed commitments and keep them pure, then you shall give them freedom to move around. God is Protector, Most Merciful. If any of these seek help from you, you shall protect them, so that they can hear the guidance of God, then send them back to their place of safety. That is because they are people who do not know."
Verses 9:5-6. Read verses 9:1-7 for a more complete picture.

The killing and the besieging is only of mushrikeen who are enemies, traitors and actively fighting against muslims. The Quran advocates protection and safe passage for the mushrikeen who seek help, and there is not a hint of forced conversion to be a muslim. Simply, because Islam is a social order, people living under it would be subject to the laws of that system, that is, the laws of God as stated in the Quran. Anyone who commits treachery would be dealt with appropriately, as they would be in *any* country.

Deen-Islam is established for the peace and security of people and those who, like the mushrikeen, cause displacement by creating fear and turmoil, must be punished, as would happen in any law-abiding country with the will and the power to enforce their laws.

It is a duty of muslims to apply and enforce God's law - as found in the Quran - and not according to the priest or politician, or those who legislate for their own self-interest. However, this should be done by consensus: elect people into administration who apply God's law and are prepared to implement it and live and act according to it.

Apostasy

Freedom of belief is a right of every individual. Apostasy is to abandon one's faith or religion. Since Islam is not a religion there is no punishment for apostasy described in the Quran, instead God states that He will not protect nor guide the people who disbelieve after believing. Those who abandon or revert from God's guidance and accept an authority to rival God are traitors (Arabic: *mushrik, mushrikeen*). People who are not guided are already on the road to turmoil and will face retribution through God's ordinance. Freedom of belief is a right of every individual, and God allows this. Muslims are instructed to be tolerant and understanding. See verses 2:217; 4:137; 9:6; 13:40; 16:125; 18:29; 41:34; 60:8; 73:10.

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commander of US forces in Afghanistan and President Obama's special envoy to the counter-ISIS coalition. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xRUC2mvPOE (February 2016).

SECTS & RELIGION

People of similar beliefs are often said to be a branch of the same religion especially if they had a common origin. This is now often applied to Islam. For example it is said that Shias are a branch of Islam and Sunnis are also a branch of Islam. In reality this is not true. Although originating from the same source, they are now both totally different religions from each other and it is impossible to reconcile the two. While professing belief in the Quran, the doctrines of both these religions are also in severe conflict with many Quranic fundamental decrees.

Primarily religion and Deen-Islam are two parallels that can never meet, so Sunnism, a religion, cannot be a *branch* of Islam and neither can Shiaism. To understand this you first have to understand the comparative difference between religion and Deen.

Deen is a word with no English equivalent but in the Quranic context can be translated as the living social order: the System of God. Religion is a subjective experience shaped by the susceptibilities and prejudices of individuals, while *Deen* is an objective reality concerned with the progress and welfare of not only individuals but mankind as a whole.

Science, like social systems, can have branches such as astronomy, geology and mathematics etc. All science disciplines are distinct yet connected and one does not contradict the other. The facts of chemistry are true, as are the facts of physics, and without being in conflict with each other, one helps us to understand the other. Is this true of religions or any of their respective sects? To be a devotee of one religion you have to deny all others. For example, the Protestant faith and Catholicism are in conflict with each other because of their doctrines, as are Shiaism and Sunnism. None can be reconciled with each other or with any other religion, and they will always be in conflict with each other.

While Sunnism and Shiaism are traditionally considered the two main ‘branches’ of Islam, Sunnism rejects the core doctrines of Shiaism as Shiaism rejects the core doctrines of Sunnism, though both say they accept the Quran as word of God, neither applies it in practice. Similarly, each of their sub-sects rejects the doctrines of each other, and on occasions rejects even the canon of the main sect to which they subscribe to, and neither do any of the sects share a common interpretation of the 'hadith and sunna', the traditions they erroneously attribute to Muhammad, and on which their sharia and hudud laws are based.

The more extreme adherents of these sects are constantly at loggerheads and frequently attack and kill each other. If they consider one another as belonging to Islam, then why do they do this? Is this not a contradiction of the Quran that says:

'No believer kills another believer, except by mistake ...'' [Verse 4.92].

Since killing each other is something they do often, they are either making many mistakes or they are not believers.

The real reason that they are at war with each other is because both are the products of political and nationalistic struggles and all have created religions, loosely based on Islam, to match their own agendas. They have diverged from a dynamic social system and created *religions* that are a means to political ends.

Their attachment to Islam is by name only and by this threadbare link they mistakenly conclude that they are branches of this dynamic Deen.

Islam is a *Deen*, a social system wholly contained in the Quran. As a social system it can be compared to other systems such as Capitalism, Socialism, Democracy, Monarchy etc. - but not with religions.

Islam is a Deen that encompasses all aspects of life, and it is the Quran that gives key values covering family, adoption, marriage, divorce, science, food, conservation, social etiquette, social welfare, governance, financial contracts, crime and punishment among many other central aspects for a life of peace and security for all people and all nations. It is the framework for a social order for all mankind. The whole process of Islam is the universal harmonisation of mankind. There are many *facets* of Islam but there can be NO branches or sects.

Every individual can remove fear and turmoil to harmonise life. This can only be fully and properly done by implementing the Absolute Laws and Permanent Values that are found in the Quran and the Quran alone. Anything else is not Deen-Islam.

Islam is an Arabic word, but to be Islamic you do not have to label it Islamic. Permanent Values and Absolute Laws create peace and security whatever you call them. The deed is far greater than the word.

Therefore, people can belong to different countries and each can be part of the Islamic society, culturally different, but their principal values remaining true to the Quran. Groups of people with conflicting aims and ideologies cannot belong to the same social system and cannot be called a society, even if they live in the same area, speak the same language, eat the same food but have goals and values that are in conflict with each others'.

God's ordinance excludes from protection anyone who rejects the Quranic values: "Anyone who seeks to follow other than Deen-Islam as a way of life, will never be accepted by Him, and in the life yet to come he will be among the losers." [Verse 3:85].

The Quran also states: "Those who separate themselves from this Deen-Islam and form conflicting sects do not belong with you. Their judgment rests with God then He will inform them of everything they had done." [Verse 6:159].

When societies split into sects, there can be nothing but disharmony: "We sent to Thamoud their brother Saleh, saying, "You shall serve God." But they turned into two feuding sects. He said, "O my people, why do you hasten to commit evil instead of good works? If only you implore God for protection from wrongdoing, you may attain mercy." [Verse 27:45-46].

Furthermore the Quran says: "Ironically, they broke up into sects only after the knowledge had come to them, due to jealousy and resentment among themselves. If it were not for a decision from your Sustainer to respite them according to His ordinance, they would have been judged immediately. Indeed, the later generations who inherit this guidance are also full of doubts." [Verse 42:14].

God gives clear and explicit instructions: "Do not be like those who divide this Deen-Islam into sects: each party rejoicing with what they have." Verse 30:32. So those who separate into sects of one kind or another are clearly going against Quranic injunctions not to divide into differing parties. Religions, sects and their splinter sects are nothing but detrimental to the welfare and progress of society.

God commands that:

"You shall hold fast in unity to this guidance from God, all of you and do not be divided. Recall God's blessings upon you, you used to be enemies and He reconciled your hearts. By His grace you became as brothers. You were at the brink of catastrophe and He saved you from this. God thus explains His revelations for you that you may be guided. Let there be a community of you who invite to what is good, advocate righteousness and forbid all that is evil. These are the ones who prosper. *Do not be like those who became divided and disputed, despite clear proofs that were given to them.* For these have incurred a terrible retribution. [Verses 3:103-105].

The Quran is the criterion for judging and reconciling disputes. Any belief or system that conflicts with the Quran is not Islam. As clearly set out in verse 3:85 anything other than Deen-Islam is not acceptable to God. All the conflicting sects and splinter groups are not different branches of Deen-Islam, they are to all effects and purposes different religions that conflict with *Deen-illah*, God's System. Therefore all such religions are not different versions of Islam, and by implication all religions are not different paths to God, they are different versions of wrong.[1064]

[1064] **The story** of 'the Blind Men and the Elephant' as told by John Godfrey Saxe is an excellent poem that shows that religions based on subjective experiences which while true in some aspects, are not absolutely so. In the tale, a group of blind men (or men in the dark) touch an elephant to learn what it is like. Each one feels a different part, but only one part, such as the side, the leg or the tail. When they compare their experiences they learn that they are in complete disagreement. Similarly, religions and religious experiences are based on the susceptibilities of men and cannot be flawless. Through time disagreements cause religions to change with innovations and diverge further into sects and subsets. With Deen-Islam, people may move away, but the source, the Quran, is always there to check and reinstate the Absolute Laws and the Permanent Values.

USURY, GAMBLING, DEBTORS & SLAVERY
ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION, CHARITY AND SOCIAL WELFARE

The measure of a nation is how it treats the weakest and the most vulnerable members of its society.

Usury (Arabic: *riba*), is profiteering or economic oppression of any kind. Usury is forbidden in the Quran in the strongest terms because it creates untold misery, usually to those who are the most vulnerable. This system of iniquity is practiced in many societies including feudal and capitalist economies. This type of economic subjugation can lead to excesses which leave the less able, and those trapped in poverty, in a perpetual state of hardship. This is because, despite regulation and laws, the bottom line for these businesses is money.

In the less-developed countries where some form of feudalism still operates, landowners and brokers not only lend money at exorbitant rates, but also take advantage of borrowers' families as additional labourers and their women for personal gratification. This is cruel and oppressive and deserves to be condemned.

Since the late 19th Century, low income families were enticed, through necessity into high-interest personal loans such as Provident Vouchers in the UK. Recent decades have seen growth in this area of legalised usury when companies lend relatively small amounts of money (e.g. Pay Day Loans) to the poor for interest rates of around 4,000%. Capitalism may have encouraged a free market economy but it is at the expense of those who can ill-afford it.

'Islamic Banking' also illustrates how religion can be used to delude people into thinking that they are doing the right thing, when in fact they have become victims of a usurious system. In housing loans (mortgages) there is little difference between the 'Islamic' bank and the conventional 'high street' bank. The conventional bank charges 'interest' whereas the 'Islamic' bank charges 'profit margin'. If the borrower fails to pay, both banks will repossess the borrower's property. Not only that, but the 'Islamic' system also has a different way of dealing with early prepayments. If the borrower were to come into a windfall and wants to pay off his loan, the conventional bank will ask him to pay only the principal sum and discount the interest that is not yet due. The 'Islamic' bank however may ask the borrower to pay the principal sum plus all the 'profit margin' for the future periods. The 'profit' is not always discounted. This does not seem to match well with the concept of fairness and justice.

The difference between profit and profiteering is greed. While profit (e.g. wages or the price of a product or service charged by a business) is the legitimate reward for one's labour, after taking away the costs incurred, profiteering is the excess earned over and above that. While we can accept that sometimes the line between the two can be subjective, we can usually recognise when we are being ripped off. This can happen when, for example, people become attracted by designer labels - often manufactured by slave labour and retailed at inflated prices. Also, purchases are sometimes made because of stress, when a bargain is struck in times of weakness or hardship. Under this pressure a usurious contract can easily occur and also in times of shortages, the price of goods goes up. While this can be justified because traders may need a minimum income to survive, in many cases the price is just hiked up to line the pockets of those in a position of advantage. This is also usury.

Gambling is to play games of chance to win money or another specified prize. Are games of chance forbidden in the Quran? The verses normally considered to mention gambling are 2:219 and 5:90. However, gambling is not mentioned in either verse. It is the word *'maysir'* that is usually wrongly translated to mean gambling. If we, for argument's sake, take the usual understanding that it means gambling then how would we translate the same word which also appears in verse 2:280? The translation of this verse would then wrongly become: "If the debtor is in difficulty, then wait for a gambling (*maysira*)". The correct translation of this verse is, of course: "If the debtor is in difficulty, then wait for an easier time (*maysira*)". In other words, if someone is unable to pay a debt, then allow additional time to help the debtor.

There is mention of 'divination' (fortune telling, predictions, betting on sports results etc.) in verse 5:90. This does not mean it's forbidden - decreed as *haram* - but the clear instruction is to avoid it due to the devastation it can cause, not only to the individual who takes part, but also to the family concerned. However, to decree all speculative ventures as *haram* would mean that 'calculated business risk' would also be forbidden and many transactions based on future stock (such as crops) could not take place.

We can elaborate the use of 'maysira' further. The word 'maysira' means additional or extra time. The origin of this word means 'excess time'. To corroborate this we can look at verse 2:280 where the same word is used: 'If the debtor is in difficulty, then wait for an easier time (maysiru).' And also: "In [free time] there is gross harm and some benefits for the people. But their potential to cause harm is greater than their benefit." [Verse 2:219]. When there is too much time on a person's hands this could lead to mischief. An English idiom aptly says "The devil makes work for idle

hands". What this means is when someone is not busy, or gainfully employed, trouble is bound to follow.

Slavery is being bound in servitude as the property of a slaveholder or a household. In modern times there appears to be no country that has a law that advocates or condones slavery, but religions such as Hinduism still practice servilism. There is also bonded labour in some developing countries and slave labour exists in many western countries, albeit underground. Also, many nations on the economic cusp, while reproachful of open slavery, turn a blind eye to conditions in their factories and farms which are, in reality, operated by slave labour.

So even in these times when we think that slavery is from a bygone age, we may be benefitting from slavery; whether it's the food we eat or the clothes we wear. Abject misery is also created in human trafficking. It is reported that children are brought from African counties to be sacrificed in religious rituals; women are imported to be employed as sex workers and other people to work in the black economy. Slavery may be legally abolished but slaves are still alive and existing in misery. The Quran does not condone slavery and decrees to free the slaves. This can only be done by creating a good and equitable economy, where employers pay a fair wage for a fair day's work and, as a consequence, customers are prepared to pay fair prices too.

Economic exploitation, Charity and Social Welfare

Usury or economic exploitation is condemned in the most serious terms but social welfare is encouraged at all times. Those who genuinely need a helping hand from society should see it as a right and those in a position to help are under an obligation to relieve the suffering of those less well off or need aid due to sickness or injury. The call is for a social commitment to be fulfilled: give dignity not charity.

Throughout the 19th. century, destitute people in Western Europe unable to pay their debt were put in debtors' prison, which was similar to locked workhouses. They worked there to pay for their incarceration costs and accrued debt. The Quran however decreed leniency for debtors and advocated expenditure for Social Welfare for the less well-off centuries before this. Verse 2:280 clearly says:

"If the debtor is in difficulty, then wait for an easier time. If you do this with sincerity, it will be better for you, if you only knew."

People in financial difficulty should not be burdened but should be helped. In recent years short term loan companies have preyed on people

who are already in great difficulty. While profit in business is condoned, the Quran condemns profiteering. See verses 2:275; 3:130; 4:161.

There are almost 200,000 registered charities in the UK. Many of even the well known ones have been involved in fundraising scandals, targeting the vulnerable and attempting contact with people who have recently died, distressing their relatives. Other operating practices considered disgraceful are that while their main objective appears to be helping the poor and needy, large amounts of donations are spent on wages and fundraising activities. Donors are giving their money to causes but charities spend it mostly on executive salaries and administrative costs. Some charities are totally funded by the government. This, many believe, inhibits them from criticising flawed policies and helps the government evade their social responsibilities. Charities, they say, don't bite the hand that feeds them.

Charities can also claim Gift Aid on donations from taxpayers. This is a claim of the tax paid on the amount equivalent to the donation. Gift Aid to charities is seriously detrimental as it takes away money from vital public services such as hospitals and schools - a truly heavy cost to society.

People should not give their tax pounds or any money to charities and should instead demand that the government of the day effectively use funds to do the job they are elected to do. Social welfare should be central to government responsibility and not any other body, be it a charity or another organisation.

It may seem striking at first, but we should not be surprised to learn that there is no charity decreed in the Quran. As always there is a very good reason for omitting something that on face value seems good but in actual fact is detrimental. Charity is the occasional voluntary donation of residual income or goods to the needy. It can be an act of pity to temporarily relieve the hardship of someone and makes the giver feel as if they have done something worthwhile. The Quran's decree is a more permanent solution with far-reaching effects. It propagates a social welfare system to help those in genuine need.

Verse 2:177 clearly says *" ...be benevolent and selflessly expend your money, despite your love for it, to become benefactors of society."* and verse 51.19 says that a portion of an individual's money is set aside for the destitute and the needy. This money should go *"first to your parents and then your relatives, the orphans, the poor and the refugees."* states verse 2:215. And how much of your money should be set aside? For each person it is different so no percentage is fixed: *"The excess part of your disposable income or goods."* as noted in verse 2:219.

When giving items other than money, it is not acceptable to *"...pick out the inferior to give away when you yourselves would not accept it unless your eyes are closed."* Verse 2:267 also reminds: *"You shall spend for good of social welfare of your community from the good things you possess and from what We have produced for you from the earth."* And also *"Those who spend their money in the cause of God, then do not follow their expenditure with reproach or insult will receive their recompense from the One who sustains them; they have nothing to fear nor will they grieve."*

Any expenditure you make for the good of social welfare is ultimately for your own good. This welfare expenditure shall be for the cause of God and will be repaid to you without the least injustice. [Verse 2:272]. *The example of those who give their money seeking God's pleasure, out of sincere conviction is that of cultured land on high fertile soil; when heavy rain falls it gives twice as much crop. If heavy rain is not available a shower will suffice. God is Seer of all that you do.* [Verse 2:265].

Furthermore, you cannot attain honour until you spend your money for the good of social welfare from the possessions you love. Whatever you expend for the welfare of society, God is fully aware of all things. [Verse 3:92].

Universal Basic Income - dignity, not charity.

Universal Basic Income (UBI) is a way of giving all residents a regular cash payment for life.

This would be a welcome change to the current benefits schemes being operated in Britain. It's not that the current system is broken, because it was made this way but for a bygone era. It may have worked then but it's clearly not fit for this century when social welfare should be much more just, especially when the means and the technology to put it into practice are available.

The Universal Basic Income would not provide complete security or affluence but fulfil its purpose in providing basic economic security to everyone – every man, woman and child. It would be unconditional because it would allow people to determine their own spending needs without any restrictions. There would be no behavioural conditions attached as recipients will not have to show they are active in seeking a job in order to qualify. The payment will not be means tested, as most current benefits are, and it would be paid regularly; weekly or monthly. Also, it would be paid as a right and like all fundamental rights it cannot be taken away.

Critics often say that such schemes will cause an increase in unemployment and draw in losers from other countries. They also say that UBI is unaffordable.

The concept of UBI is not new, it has been around for a very long time and in recent decades there have been many pilot schemes in Africa, India, South America and many other places – all with impressive results. While there have been initial variations in unemployment the long term

advantages to the economy and to the general welfare of individuals and community have shown to be positive and substantial.

It is true that a small number of people will not work, but these people would not have worked anyway. Most people are ambitious and want to improve themselves and a Basic Income received regularly gives them the security that they need to pursue work as a creative activity rather than labour dependent wages for a job they may not be happy with. People are more productive when they are stress-free and can have a greater input into society by either volunteering or taking on additional paid work. Entrepreneurs and inventors can also put to use their ingenuity and imagination without the risk of worrying about their basic needs. While economic security is essential for the well-being of an individual, but above all Universal Basic Income gives freedom and dignity and is equitable in a way that other benefits are not.

As for the question of affordability it too can be dealt with practically. While the nitty-gritty of finances can be left to the economists the broad points can easily be understood by most people. For example the current tax system and benefit payments can be realigned as can other spending by respective governments. Also 'corporate warfare' which costs the country billions can be diverted for public good. While the average waged labourer has his or her taxes deducted at source, many businesses avoid paying tax through 'tax mechanisms' that allow them to do just that. In reality these are legal loopholes created by the rich for the rich to help them pay the least amount of tax possible. The Panama papers and the Paradise papers provided enough evidence of these smoke and mirror activities. Should the government wish, the revenue brought in by closing these escape routes to tax havens should be sufficient to pay for UBI without any additional cost to the Exchequer.

Some critics also say that charities are doing enough for the poor and needy. There are more than 190,000 (and increasing) registered charities in the UK. But the performance of these charities is disgraceful with less than half of the average collections by charities going to the causes they represent. One well known cancer charity was in the news for spending as little as 3% of the donations it received on its declared cause while the rest went to 'administrative expenses'. Reliance on discretionary charity can be precarious, as most of the funding does not appear to help those in need. This is why, while it may seem striking at first, we should not be surprised to learn that there is no charity in the Quran.

An act of charity is pity more akin to contempt while the Quranic decrees dignity both for the giver and receiver. The first incitement in the Quran is

to become benefactors of humanity by sharing inherited social wealth; to spend money, despite the desire to hold on to it, for those in need.[1065]

The wealth of society, the Quran says, belongs to all its members; it decrees to compensate every individual and for each person to look after each other's interests. This is social welfare and Universal Basic Income underpins the freedom and dignity attached to it.

The current benefits system is hanging on a very shaky nail. It stigmatises people, it's precarious and provides no stability or proper permanent security. Insecure people are not rational, especially when faced with an uncertain future. Such situations that cause division in society are dangerous and volatile. The extreme right, as seen in recent years, has taken advantage of this to create tension within communities, especially amongst migrant and religious groups. To provide basic financial security unconditionally for everyone would be the foundation for a peaceful and harmonious society.

People have an alienable right to a regular secure basic income and the government owes this debt to them. The British government has reflected this in some benefits such as the NHS (nationally) and cost-free medicine prescriptions (in Scotland) but it needs to go the full course and provide Universal Basic Income for all its permanent residents. By doing this it would show that it recognises this right and that each and every person deserves dignity and not charity.

Please also see Parents, Children and Family: *You deserve success – but how much?* discussed earlier in this section.

Equity and Equality - what is the distinction?

Although the terms equality and equity are often used interchangeably, this can lead to some confusion because while these concepts are related, there are also important distinctions between them. Equity involves giving people *what they need* to enjoy a happy and full life. Equality by contrast, aims to ensure that everyone *gets the same things* in order to enjoy the same standard of a full and healthy life. The aim of equality is to promote fairness and justice, but it can only work if everyone starts from *the same place* and needs *the same things*.

[1065] **Inherited social wealth** is the income from resources that belong to all people (minerals, metals, oil etc.) whether derived from physical assets or intangible assets and all that produces financial benefits as a result of what our ancestors and our society has done in the past or are doing today. For more information visit basicincome.org. See also verses and footnotes 2:3 and 21:112.

To show the distinction between equity and equality we can look at the health care system in the United Kingdom which is based on the concept of equality. It is designed to ensure that everyone has the same access to health care services regardless of their ability to pay for the health services they receive. On the face of it this seems fair. But it is limited in promoting a fair and just service because it ignores other important factors – such as language, place of residence, sex of the individuals – that can also act as barriers to receiving proper care. At the same time, ensuring the same access to care for everyone assumes that everyone has similar health issues and similar health care needs. This is not always the case. Many people live with social, political and economic disadvantages that contribute to poor health. For example, people who live in poverty frequently have more health issues than those with more money. As a result, they may need additional or special services rather than just the standard ones, to counter the force, for example, of substandard housing, limited access to fresh, nutritious foods, and exposure to unsafe environments.

Equity means to make sure that they have *what they need* to achieve and maintain good health and well-being. Once everyone enjoys a similar level of health and well-being, the focus can then be placed on preserving fairness by giving everyone *the same things*: this is *equality*.

Equality is the outcome, equity is levelling the field so that equality can be achieved. In the Quran this concept is known as *ehsan*. This mean to balance society and close the gaps created by any disparity caused by *zulm*, the displacement of values. This ultimately results in peace and security.

Are men and women equal?

The Quran makes a true and proper distinction between the differences among men and women and takes into account their needs, rights and responsibilities within the constructs of a fair and just society. Their unique roles are natural and inherent, but the outcome of their belief and actions, determined by the Law of Requital, is equality that is strengthened with equity: fairness and justice. Understanding the differences between equity and equality therefore helps us to recognise and accept the differences in not only the sexes, but also among people in general. More importantly, it can guide us to do something about the situation to improve it.

Equality is sameness - everyone getting the same thing, and equity is fairness - ensuring everyone not only gets the same opportunities but the same rewards for the same work or good deeds. True equality is the result of equity. See verse and footnote 33:35. See also 27:11; 65:11.

SOLAA: COMMITMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS

Worship in one form or another is part of religious ritual and for the traditional Muslim, the five obligatory prayers are key components of their creed. These can be supplemented with many other compulsory or voluntary offerings called *sunnat, nafal, tuhajad, taraweeh, kusoof* etc. but the five remain the core ritual prayers of the regular cycle of worship. In their eyes, to be a Muslim, you must believe in and perform the ritual prayers that are commonly known as salat.

Of course, millions of Muslims do not perform these daily ritual prayers and may only join a congregation once a week for the Friday ritual, tarweh prayers in Ramadan and on festival days such as Eid. Whether you pray or not, it remains an obligatory tenet of faith. To deny the ritual prayers, as with other pillars of faith, is to render oneself, in the eyes of the self-appointed 'guardians of faith' a non-believer.

In the hadith books there are scattered remnants that can be pulled together to form a prayer of sorts. These disjointed incidents do not form the rituals of prayer that we see today. In fact, in the whole canon of hadith literature, the full liturgy of the ritual prayer, known as salat, cannot be found. This is probably why different sects have formulated their own versions of prayer with varying words and genuflexes following the teachings of their own particular imams.

The individual who understands human nature will realise that prayer at best is a passive act. While it may give some self-satisfaction and a sense of a duty performed, it yields nothing constructive. Ritual prayer is a religious duty and since no real results are produced by prayers, then we must accept ritual prayer as a fruitless activity designed to keep the devout busy and shackled in devotion. This keeps the masses perpetually and uselessly active and unable to widen their scope of thought and activity. All rituals are constructed to have this effect in one way or another.

However, there is a distinction between *salat*, which can be considered the Arabic for ritual prayers, and *solaa* the Quranic word for obligation or commitment. Some researchers express the word *solaa* to mean 'to link' or to 'connect.' Lane's Lexicon states that *solaa* means 'to follow something closely'. Is this not what a person does when he or she is committed to something? The most compelling evidence that *'solaa'* means 'committed' is that when this word is transposed for all appearances (and its derivatives) of the word *'solaa'* in the Quran. The verses then start to make sense. On the other hand if we insist that *'solaa'* means 'ritual prayer' we face significant problems.

Supplications (Arabic: *dua*) to God can help a person to focus on particular challenges he or she may be facing, supplications, often

demonstrated in the Quran by messengers, are an affirmation of your desires and goals and God's law of attraction fulfils them. Ritual prayers can do nothing for the individual and they certainly do nothing for God. Ritual prayers of any description have no practical purpose in an individual's life.

To deem that *solaa* and its derivatives mean ritual prayer (salat) is a weak assertion and as shown here throws up many problems. Should we transpose the words 'ritual prayer' throughout the Quran onto the word *solaa* or any of its derivatives then many verses become confusing. Yet this is exactly what traditionalist translators have done. In order to show that *solaa* means ritual prayer they struggle and wrongly interpret some verses to make the word fit. For example:

1. The commandments for ritual prayers (salat) are said to have been given to Muhammad. However, the Jews [Verse 2:43; 5:12], Moses [Verse 20:14] and Jesus, as a child, [Verse 19:31] were among the people engaged in *solaa.* If this solaa means ritual prayer, how could they know about it before it was decreed? Furthermore Abraham was a muslim [verse 22:78] and Muhammad was commanded to follow him [Verse 3:95], and the Deen given to mankind in the Quran is the same as given to all the previous messengers [Verse 42:13]. So how could all the previous messengers and communities be *muslim* without performing the five ritual prayers and yet people these days cannot?
2. God's messenger Shuaib said *solaa* can change the economic system. Despite an increasing number of people engaged in ritual prayers, we cannot see any improvement in the prosperity of any Muslim nation. [Verse 11:87].
3. God's creatures, such as birds are engaged in *solaa*. How do they perform the liturgy of prayer, if solaa indeed means ritual prayer? [Verse 24:41].
4. Can Muslims pray with disbelievers? Would disbelievers perform prayers with Muslims, while they remain disbelievers? Yet the Quran says that *solaa* can be made with disbelievers. How is this possible? [Verses 4:101-102].
5. Then there is the *solaa* of God upon his creations. If solaa means ritual prayer then how does God pray? God revealed the Quran as guidance for people to apply it in their lives. This is so that each individual Self can develop through meaningful activity. So how can chanting His guidance back to Him (in prayers) be of benefit to anyone? [Verses 2:157; 33:43; 33:56].

To complicate matters further, the advocates of 'salat' have translated the word *solaa* in many contradictory ways. This is because ritual prayer does not fit all the situations so changes to the meaning are made to try and fit square pegs into round holes. For example the word has been translated as, prayer, blessings, connect, place of worship, people who pray and oratories. Check the various traditional translations to verify this.

It is obvious to anyone with even a basic understanding of the Quranic Arabic that words with the same root and all its derivatives do not change meaning. This Arabic is a language like no other. Because of its consistent rules it makes it an incisive language; the meanings of the words with the same root are therefore also consistent.

When we substitute the correct meaning of *commitment* or *obligation* for *solaa,* we see the meaning becomes clear:

1. The Jews, Jesus, Isaac and Jacob, as well as others established *solaa*; they were *committed* and fulfilled their *obligations* to God and to their communities. [Verses 2:43; 3:39; 5:12; 20:14; 19:31]
2. Shuaib wanted his people to establish *solaa,* that is to establish their *commitments* in trade and commerce. It is easy to see how fulfilling *obligations* in ethical trading standards would have made his community prosperous. [Verse 11:87].
3. God's creatures, as well as birds know their *solaa.* That is they perform their *commitments* through instinct and act only according to the ordinance of God. [Verse 24:41].
4. All muslims can *commit* themselves to agreements and treaties with disbelievers; that means to establish their *solaa* with them. They can also ask them to witness their legal obligations such as wills. This is evident in modern life. [Verses 4:101-102].
5. Solaa by God? Yes, God also performs *solaa*, as the sustainer of everything, God has *obligated* himself to send sustenance to His creatures and He has *committed* himself to send relief from turmoil (through His ordinance) to those who follow His guidance. [Verse 2:157]. *Solaa* is undertaken not only by God but also by the malaika, as confirmed by verses 33:43 and 33 56.

As a muslim an individual is obliged to observe his or her virtuous commitments, even in times of hardship. Solaa is the *commitment* to observe the prescribed covenants. This encompasses the whole of God's commandments in the Quran. It covers all obligations including relationships, agreements, promises, one's obligations to oneself, family, parenting, business and so on.

By fulfilling these obligations an individual purifies his or her Self and strengthens the essence of the Self.

Life throws many challenges and sometimes these can be harrowing and unpleasant. Our commitment to God's commandments is tested by them. However, these obstacles are not our enemies. By overcoming them, we bring out the best in ourselves in preparation for the life yet to come. But, let's not forget that heaven begins here. Even in this life, man becomes a better human not in solitude but in the hurly burly of life - by facing challenges and fulfilling his commitments.

It is apparent that there is no ritual prayer in the Quran. The instruction to establish *solaa* is to establish *commitments* and fulfil our *obligations* to ourselves, our family, communities and everyone else - just as the messengers did. Indeed God and the malaika establish *solaa* and his creations, following His laws, fulfil their commitments too.

To pray (as ritual worship for forgiveness of sins or to get relief form an illness etc.) is to ask that the laws of the universe be annulled on behalf of a single petitioner who is confessedly unworthy. God is implicit in everything. He does not need or want our rituals or lip-service glorifications.

The message in the Quran is a call to belief, action and ultimate accountability to God. Belief is impressing our Self with the divine blueprint; actions are the manifestation of the belief and accountability is showing responsibility for our actions. Being virtuous is overcoming our regressive egotistic Self - the Iblees within us. It is virtuous deeds - the action - that overcome the hurdles, the challenges of life, not passive prayer. It is in religion that individuals seek mercy and grace through a saviour. In Deen-Islam it is the good deeds that glorify God [verse 21:20], and God dignifies mankind by giving the opportunities for Self development and *raising their own* eminence. See verse and footnote 90:4 and 94:5.

So does this mean that we cannot even make any kind of prayer or praise God? No, this is not the case. In verse 10:10 an example of the ultimate praise to God is given but the true glorification of God is when we enjoy the good things He has gifted to us and develop our Self to raise our status and become fit for a higher existence. God knows everything - all our secrets and declarations, so we don't need to establish any *rituals* like prayer. Our service to God is everything. Hands that serve are better than lips that pray. Action speaks louder than words and this is what the verses 107:1-7 in the Quran tells us. There are many instances shown in the Quran when the messengers make supplications to God. So yes we can make supplications to Him. There are also many examples in the Quran of what to say in our supplications, such as the *'dua'* in verse 2:286. As mentioned earlier, these

help us to focus and *affirm* our own aspirations, goals and desires and God's law of attraction fulfils them.

Some verses where the word *solaa* and its derivatives appear.

Solaa (Root S'L): commitment, obligation, steadfastness, duty.

1. Solaa (of Shu'aib's community) can change economic system. Verse 11:87. **2.** Solaa of the Jews. Verse 2:43.**3.** Solaa of the child Jesus. Verse 19.31. **4.** Solaa of Isaac and Jocob. Verse 21.23. **5.** Solaa of birds. Verses 24.41. **6.** Solaa with possible strangers after witnessing a will. Verse 5:106. **7.** Solaa with disbelievers and mushriks. Verses 9:4-6. **8.** People (hypocritical) of the Deen, who are obliged (to do good deeds) but are heedless of their commitments. Verses 107:1-7. **9.** Solaa (commitments) with disbelievers. Verses 4:101,102; 5:58. **10.** Solaa of Moses, his brother and their people. Verse 10:87. **11.** Solaa of the Children of Israel: God will be with them as long as they keep their commitments and keep them pure. Verses 5:12-13. **12.** Observance of Solaa. Verses 2:238; 24:58. **13.** Solaa of God: verses 2.157; 33:43. **14.** Solaa of God and the malaika with the messenger: verse 33:56; with individuals: verse 33:43.

Solaa derivatives:

faSolaa 87:15.
faSolee 108:2.
musollan 70:22-34, 74:43, 107:4 and 2:125.
solaa 75:31, 96:10.
solaa ta - 46 times.
solaa tahu 24:41.
solaa taka 9:103.
solaa te 20 times.
solaa tehim 6:92, 23:2, 70:23, 70:34, 107:5.
solaa teka 17:110.
solaa tu 62:10.
solaa-tuhum 8:35.
solaa-tukka 11:87.
solaa-waatee 9:99, 2:238, 23:9.
solaa-waatun 22:40.
solee 9:103.
solluu 33:56.
tuSolee 9:84, 108:2.
yaslu 38:56
yasluna 14:29, 82:15
yuSilla 4:90, 6:136, 11:70, 11:81, 13:21, 8:35.
yuSolaa 2:27, 13:21, 13:25.
yusolee 3:39, 33:43.
yuSollu 33:56, 4:10

The different ways the word *solaa* and its derivatives have been translated in traditional translations: *ritual prayer, connect, contact, supplicate, blessed, honour, place of worship, churches, oratories.* This is one of the most abused and contorted words. The mistranslation of this one word alone is sufficient to show how a word can be manipulated to mean anything to those who don't know the Quran. However, since we have the original it is easy to check and revert back to the correct meaning.

Is there any need for ritual prayer? God responds, without the need for ritual prayer, to any caller who calls to Him, while following His guidance: Verse 40:60. **Seek help** through steadfast and observing your

commitments. Verses 2:45-46. **By doing** good works people keep their duty and commitments (solaa) to Him. In fact it is through good works, not ritual prayer, that God can be glorified. See verses 2:3; 2:30; 21:19-20; 57:1; 59:24. **The intelligent** remember God whether standing, sitting or lying down. Verse 3:190-191. **In fulfilling** our commitments and obligations we glorify God. Verses 62:1; 24:41; 17:44.

Had God wanted people to worship him through a ritual prayer, He would have made it clear. He has given details of eating, social etiquette, washing etc. so why not give details of something as important as a ritual prayer? The introduction of the ritual prayer was to remove people from the dynamic system of Deen-Islam. Hands that work are better than lips that pray: it's actions that change people and societies, not rituals. In verse 60:4 Abraham is cited as an example for mankind. However, when supplicating to God neither Abraham nor Zachariah performed any rituals (washing, standing, bowing, prostrating etc.) that are associated with traditional ritual prayer. See verses 3:38 & 14:39. Verse 2:177.

Another word traditionally mistranslated is ***dua*****:** the correct meaning is: call, invite, supplicate, petition, summon, invoke. (Arabic: *Dua.* Irregular Root: D'A. Derivatives: *du'wani, dawa, duwa, da'wataka, uduw'ila, ud'aw*). God responds to supplications: 2:186. Responding to God's call: 14:44. Invite to your sustainer: 16:125. Those with affected deafness cannot hear the call: 21:45. God says call on me and I will respond to you: 40:60. See verse and footnote 2:3. Invite to God: 12:108; 41:33.

HAJJ - THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE

For all individuals, without a doubt, the odds in this life are against them. But the obstacles are there not to frustrate, but to bring out the best in you. They are designed to put you on your mettle and permit the indomitable Self you possess to reveal itself in all its glory. You develop yourself in the course of overcoming obstacles. Frustration will force you to reconstruct your personality. Rebuffs and set-backs toughen and harden you and by facing *challenges* you develop a mature personality. So even at times when the world appears to be stern and unkind, in the long run it turns out to be not your enemy, but your friend. This is why the concept of *challenge* is important: the concept of *hajj.* Hajj means to challenge or confront.

In verse 2:196 the Quran decrees that you "shall take the *challenge* to promote the living system in the name of God. If you are restricted in any way, you shall strive to do what you can. If you are ill or suffering an injury you shall expiate by Self-discipline, as an act of sincerity or some other form of work for the good of society. Be practical when facing the *challenges* for promoting the living system. Self-discipline is required for three days and then a further seven to make a ten day period to complete this. Self-sacrifice is necessary to uphold the Sanctioned Submissions especially when you are at a distance from home. You shall fulfil your duty to God and know that God is strict in enforcing retribution."

This challenge described above is for everyone to take part and promote the practical values and standards of God's system in the living world. Take a fixed number of days to give your time and money for the promotion of Deen-Islam. You must take up this challenge to make your neighbourhood, city, country and the world a place of peace and security by removing fear and turmoil from around us. You do this when you promote this Deen-Islam and implement this guidance. Quranic values offer long term benefits both to individuals and societies. They nurture the strength of the Self to help face the *challenges* that life inevitably throws at the human being.

Those who reject the guidance in the Quran will face other challenges: "As they **confront each other in the inferno** (Arabic: *hajj-i-finaar*) of their deeds, the supporters will say to their leaders, "We used to be your followers, can you spare us any part of this hell?" The leaders will say, "We are all in this together. God has judged the people." [Verses 40:47-48].

In traditional translations 'hajj' is wrongly translated as pilgrimage, and in some verses as dispute or argue. According to the root structures of the Arabic language hajj means 'challenge or confront'. If the word 'hajj' means 'pilgrimage', then the verse 40:47 would read: *'making a pilgrimage to the inferno*' instead of the true meaning "*confront each other in the inferno*". Those condemned to hell confront each other, especially the followers who plead with those who led them to now save them from this punishment. But judgement has been passed and there they must stay. Other verses also negate that idea that 'hajj' means pilgrimage.

Note that the Quran states [Verse 40:47-48] these companions did not 'argue in the inferno' but that they 'confront' each other. See verse and

footnote: 2:76. For the word argue, dispute and debate: See also verse and footnote 2:197.

The rite of pilgrimage is one of the most damaging ideas in any religion. For a journey to a supposed 'holy' place, millions of people gather to perform trite rituals with the single egotistical aim of attaining salvation only for themselves. Many hope to die there, as hundreds of pilgrims do each year, in the hope of 'martyrdom' and a first class ticket to heaven. Nothing could be more selfish.

On the annual pilgrimage to Mecca each person spends a liberal amount of money; the most he or she can afford. This vast pool of money funds the cost of travel, accommodation, food, holy gifts, barbers for the hair cutting ceremony, and so on. It fills the pockets of governments, travel agents, mediators and other operators. In 2015 the annual pilgrimage industry was worth more than £8.4 billion, including the non-obligatory lesser pilgrimages undertaken throughout the year. In the same year the total Saudi tourist industry was worth almost £16 billion. The figures are mind boggling and are set to increase each year as more emphasis is placed on pilgrimages because the oil revenue is said to be declining. For the locals the pilgrimage is a major source of income as in any major tourist industry. Many barbers, for the essential hair cutting ceremony, can triple their price and ensure that they don't lose out on any seasonal *profiteering* that has become customary at this time for all trades.

Because of the mistaken belief that the pilgrimage is decreed by God, people consider it an act of ultimate piety and many use their life savings despite the poor living conditions in the home countries of the respective pilgrims. One year's income from pilgrimage trade could alone change the lives of all the citizens in any one country each year. For example, Bangladesh is frequently devastated by floods. The poverty in some areas is unimaginable with dire living conditions, crude sanitation and no running water or electricity - truly a life of hell.

When God speaks about social welfare, he means the concept of *ehsan*, to balance society and close the gaps created by the disparity of poor distribution of wealth, not only locally but also globally, that is why it says that people should *expend* their money for social welfare.

Going on a lavish or even a basic pilgrimage does not in reality fulfil any duty to God. With all the money spent on pilgrimages, if diverted in the *service* of God, muslims with one stroke could wipe out a poor nation's debt, raise the living standards and create a society that has dignity, respect and economic strength.

Money spent on a pilgrimage may satisfy one's inner desire and give some emotional comfort to the individual, but this is a false hope because according to the Quran it is the act of facing and overcoming life's real challenges that develop the Self and not such selfish acts of fulfilling

contrived rituals in order to gain a passage to heaven. In reality rituals such as pilgrimages are an economic exploitation of society.

We just need to look around us to see the heart wrenching situations that grip people in many parts of the world. Most people are poor, hungry and lack even the basic reading and writing skills. Millions don't have proper homes, those that do have somewhere they can call home, the standard is so poor it can barely be called survival. Poor sanitation, no running water, gas, electric or enough food to eat. They have no health care to speak of and children grow up in conditions we would be ashamed to keep our dogs in. In some Asian countries, due to ignorance and poverty, mothers kill their baby girls fearing the burden of a dowry payment. Each day millions face economic oppression and are weighed down by exorbitant loans, leading many to take their own lives.

These are the people that need their standard brought up to a decent level of living for human beings. These are the ones that can be helped by money, money that many wrongly believe guarantees them a ticket to heaven.

The money spent on pilgrimages and mosques can be better spent on building hospitals, schools, universities, libraries and community health care. The countries that send the most pilgrims are probably the ones that need these facilities the most.

The Quranic concept of *ehsan* is to balance society and that is why the concept of social welfare is important. Those in a position to do so are obligated to contribute from their income. The word the Quran uses to describe this expenditure is *anfaq*. This can be a portion of your money set aside for directly helping those in need and also tax paid to central government for the maintenance of a national welfare system .

When we see the billions of pounds spent on religious rites as a gateway to heaven, which only those with money can afford, while other people: poor people, millions of men, women and children suffer daily, die daily because of lack of care that this money can easily buy, the situation begs the question: did God *really* ordain such a ritual? Are people so heartless as to trample over the rights of the needy to make for themselves a pathway to heaven?

To expend yourself and your money (from what God has bestowed upon you) and to stamp out poverty, hunger and poor living standards is the *challenge* that you really need to undertake. To stop slavery, dowry and oppression is what people should strive for. To fight against aggression and injustice around the world is the *challenge* people should stand up for.

Now that would be taking on a real *challenge*.

That is hajj, according to the Quran.

ZAKAA - PURITY IN CHARACTER

The Quranic meaning of *zakaa* is 'pure'. Throughout the Quran *zakaa* is frequently used alongside *solaa,* as for example in verse 2:43: "You shall observe your commitments (*solaa*) and keep them pure (*zakaa*) ..."

Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. Therefore, keeping your commitments and obligations pure and uncontaminated is an important part of life because genuine sincerity cannot exist when mixed with polluted ideas.

Moses' task was to go to Firawn who is oppressing his people and convince Firawn to stop this transgression and purify his Self of wrongdoing. [Verse 79:17-18]. When an individual moves forward on the straight and balanced path his good actions purify his Self. In other verses such as 92:7-9, God states that he created the Self and revealed how to safeguard it from the effects of evil, and by their good action the righteous purify it; those who do so are the successful ones. Purity also strengthens the Self making it fit for the life yet to come.

"Those who believe, lead a righteous life and observe their commitments and keep them pure, receive their recompense from God; they will have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve." [Verse 2:277].

Other verses show the importance of purity in character: because of John's righteousness, he was endowed with purity. [Verse 19:13]. Jesus was pure in character [Verse 19:19] and his mother Mary was pure and chosen above all women in the world as an exemplary person. There are many other such verses which show that people of good character fulfil their commitments and keep them *pure* - sincere and untainted by corruption from outside sources, and the Quran advocates all people to do this. See verse 2:42 for further references.

In traditional translations confusion is perpetuated when as in verse 58:13 both *sadaqah* and *zakaa* are translated as charity, while in verse 19:19 *zakaa* is translated as holy and in 19:13 it is translated as purity. Also in verse 79:17-18 reads: "Go thou to Pharaoh, for he had indeed transgressed all bounds. And say to him, wouldst thou that thou shouldst be purified *tazakki* (from sin)?" If zakaa (and its derivatives) mean charity, how can it be translated as purity or holy? See Yousaf Ali translation.

The fact is that the traditional translators have mistakenly misconstrued different meanings for the word *zakaa*. The roots of the words define that *zakaa* means pure, purity etc and *sadaqah* means sincere, true. etc.[1066]

[1066] **Pure:** (Arabic: *zakaa*. from the root Z'K'W). Purity is an essential condition to help an individual grow, develop and progress. Therefore, keeping your commitments and obligations pure and unadulterated is an important part of life because genuine sincerity cannot exist when mixed with polluted ideas. See verses 2:83; 2:129; 2;151; 2:277; 9:102-3; 18:81; 19:13; 19:19; 19:31; 22:78; 24:21; 35:18; 58:12,13; 79:17-18; 91:1-9.

CREATION FROM CLAY

Why did God create everything? This is not a question that we can answer with any degree of certainty, but we can make an intelligent comment. It is in the nature of a 'Self' to express itself. God being a 'super Self' or 'super ego' expresses Himself by creating not only the physical world but by creating a 'free will', which He endowed on the human being. Scientists, by trying to create 'artificial intelligence', are in fact trying to replicate what God has already created. After art, architecture, and rapid advances in technology the human 'Self' is trying to express itself in a 'godlike' manner.

"God did not create the invisible world and visible world, including the human being, except to serve him in the order of creation." [Verse 51:56].

"O people, fulfil your duty to the One who sustains you; the One who created everything from one Self, a single entity and created from it its mate, then evolved from the two many creations. " [Verse 4:1].

"He is the One who perfected everything He created and initiated the life of mankind from clay." [Verse 32:7].

When people are told that human beings were created from clay, creationists often imagine that God created man with the command 'Be' that instantly turned a mound of clay into a man (Adam) in the final finished form and then from his rib He created a woman (Eve) and they both reproduced and became the first parents of the whole of mankind.

This cannot be true, as evolutionary biology paints a completely different picture, and the Quran's statement that God created humans from clay is consistent with this. However, we are not talking about the clay we see today, the clay that's commonly used to make pots and other such things. The clay that life first started from is primordial, chemical-rich clay and the process took many billions of years. From this 'clay' emerged the first form of 'life' that started the evolutionary process of all living beings; animals as well as humans. God creates and directs his creation, but only within laws - all God's creations are a *process* of His ordinance

Scottish chemist Alexander Cairns-Smith, in his study on how biological life first started, began by asking the question: What is one of the central qualities that defines life? For him, the answer was the ability to reproduce, or self-replicate. It is usually considered that the original self-replicator is DNA. Is it possible that there were self-replicating genes before DNA that would not have been so susceptible to damage by the early environment on earth? [1067]

What was needed were genes that could acquire and retain information and use that information to interact with their environment. Cairns-Smith

[1067] **Alexander Graham Cairns-Smith** an organic chemist and molecular biologist at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. He is most famous for his book, Seven Clues to the Origin of Life.

posed the question: was there something even simpler than DNA that possessed all these abilities? The answer was yes; that something was crystals. After further study, the theory was proposed that there was a crystalline form that not only interacted with its environment in a complex and ordered way but also possessed an innate tendency to evolve. That crystalline form was the colloidal suspension of quartz particles in water, more commonly known as *clay*. This type of clay is a fine-grained substance probably consisted of aluminum silicate, quartz and organic fragments.

What generated the 'spark' of life? Piezoelectricity is the ability of some materials, notably crystals, to generate an electrical potential in response to applied mechanical stress. The word is derived from the Greek *piezo* or *piezein*, which means to squeeze or press. The pressure some crystals may have experienced induced the necessary stress required to create the first 'life', in the crystals suspended in the clay. This colloidal suspension is the 'primordial soup' or 'clay' from which that first spark of life came. So the Quran's statement that God created the human being from a clay is correct, albeit the process of evolution was over a very long period. The Quran gives the essence of this life-giving aspects of clay and it is the scientists who will discover the details.[1068]

[1068] **Creation and evolution.** The beginning of life: see verses and footnotes: 36:82 and 3:185; 4:1; 11:7; 32:9; 71:14; 76:2; 84:19. Creation: 3:59; 7:20; 38:27; 44:38; 75:4; 77:20; 79:27-33; 80:18-23. Displacement: 27:11; 35:20; 65:11.

CARBON - THE KEY TO LIFE

Carbon is one of the most abundant elements in the universe and it is present in all forms of carbon-based life. In the human body carbon is the second most abundant element, almost a fifth of the body mass. Carbon also forms soft graphite as used in pencils and diamonds, one of the hardest substances in the world. The abundance of carbon, together with the unique diversity of organic compounds and their unusual polymer-forming property at the temperatures commonly encountered on Earth, make this element the chemical basis of all known life. Carbon also forms many different kinds of bonds and essential compounds. The carbon cycle shows how carbon moves through the living and non-living parts of the environment.

In verses 36:78-80 of the Quran a question of some significance is asked: "Who can resurrect our bones after they have decomposed?" This rhetorical question is answered by God and He says: "The One who initiated them in the first place will resurrect them." Then the example to illustrate this also comes from God: "He is the One who creates for you from the green trees, fuel which you burn for light." Further in verses 17:49-52 it is said: They questioned, "After we turn into bones and fragments, we get resurrected anew?" Say: "Yes. Even if you turn into rocks or iron."

Someone who has little or no knowledge of this important element of life, carbon, might think that the example of bones has no link with that of trees, rocks or iron. But, the link is easily established and science shows that the link is carbon.

A carbon atom that today exists in a rock may once have formed part of a bone or a leaf, and in the future, may once again find its way into living matter. The carbon atom is stable even if that bone or leaf is reduced to burnt down ash.

Is life after death possible? Science tells us that nothing is destroyed, but changes from one form or another; this also applies to energy, not just matter. This is why the human Self does not die but continues to live after death in a weaker or stronger state - depending on the development undertaken through the challenges of life. Some carbon compounds even act as data banks and one - DNA, the master databank itself - passes on information from one generation to the next. That discovery takes us to the last two verses 75:3-4. "Does the human being think that We are unable to reconstruct his bones?"

According to God He can assemble man's '*ba-neneh'*. This word has often been translated as 'fingertips', but, 'genetic print' is a much more accurate translation of *ba-neneh*, a unique word in the Quran that appears only once. It is interesting that *ba-neneh* is used only one time in the Quran, perhaps to demonstrate the uniqueness of each individual Self.

DOES INTERCESSION WORK?

An intercessor is a mediator or arbitrator (Arabic: *shafeeh*), that looks after the interests of someone. In this sense the Quran too is *shafeeh* because, through its guidance, it looks after the interests of mankind and society. However, in the religious sense it is a person who intervenes on behalf of another, especially by prayer. The Quran rejects the notion that an intercessor is needed to appeal to God, because every individual will be judged by his or her deeds and given a status that is rightfully theirs.[1069]

Intercession in religious terms is undeserved favouritism. This is where criminals can ask influential people, in this case a messenger of God such as Muhammad, on the 'day of judgement' to intercede and ask God for absolution and forgiveness to avoid the penalties for their ill deeds. However, in reality this is not so and no intercession is accepted by God. What you plant, so must you reap.

The Quran mentions *shafa'at*: looking after each other's interests. In an ordered society that follows the Deen-Islam every individual should be a 'shafeeh' – someone who is aware of the affect of their actions on other people's affairs and interests and therefore acts in a positive manner. There will be no *shafeeh* to look after the interests of the wrongdoers - simply because it is a mistake to support the corrupt. Furthermore, in verses 21:27-29, God makes clear His messengers...

"...never convey anything of their own whim and they strictly follow His commands. He knows their future and their past. ***They, His messengers, need not intercede on behalf of anyone, those who send forth their good deeds are already honoured by Him.*** *The messengers worry about their own future. If any one of them claims to be an authority equal or rival to God, We punish him with the torment of hell; We thus rebuke the wicked."*

If the messengers cannot intercede, what right have priests, saints and other 'holy' men?

The basic meaning of *shafa'at* is to act as a community and to look after each other's interests. The main goal of the Quran is to establish a socio-economic system that helps mankind develop as a whole. For this purpose, the Quran advocates a system of collective living rather than individualism because mankind can develop only as a whole in a healthy and stable society. Social systems that promote or encourage selfishness, greed and exploitation of fellow humans where the individual's interests prevail over collective interests conflict with the Quranic values.

Social systems in which the very rich do not care for the poor - in spite of improved resources - suppress human potential. Such a system produces

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[1069] **Mediator,** arbitrator, benefactor, intercessor: providing justice and by consequence ensuring peace and security, looking after the interests of another. (Arabic: *shafeeh*). **The Quran** is *shafeeh* because it looks after the interest of mankind through its guidance. See verses 16:69; 17:82; 41:44. Quran as a mercy to mankind: verse 21:106.

corrupt and characterless individuals and creates severe imbalances in all spheres of that society.

In a muslim society that follows the Quranic Deen every individual should be a *shafeeh* – someone who is aware of the affect of their actions on other people's affairs and interests. A *shafeeh* will make every effort to achieve collective objectives. The administrators of an Islamic state are *shafeeh* of their fellow citizens. Their primary responsibility is to ensure protection for every citizen and not allow any of the citizens to feel neglected in respect of their individual rights and basic needs. This sort of *shafeeh* among muslims is not limited to them, but indeed extends to other nations.

Our commitment to God is to make His 'system of economy' successful and useful for the whole of humankind. For this purpose they are encouraged to cooperate with other nations in all works that are carried out according to the divine laws for the welfare, peace, stability and strength of humankind. They are prohibited from cooperation with those who act against the interests of humankind. They must not make plans that create division, rifts and disunity among the people and to not sap their energies and vigour, and leave them unsubstantial.

Accordingly the Quran says: "Whoever contributes to a good deed receives a share of the resulting reward and whoever takes part in any evil work incurs a share of the retribution. God holds to account all things." [Verse 4:85]. This is the Quranic concept of shafa'at.

Now, compare this with the traditional notion: it is believed that on the Day of Judgement, God will condemn the criminals and sinners to hell. Then the pious, the saints and the 'holy' men – especially the messengers, and Muhammad in particular – will come forward for the defence of criminals and request a general amnesty. God will pardon them on the request of the holy and pious men and send the criminals from hell to heaven. This is called intercession. Obviously, this definition of intercession is not what is meant in the Quran – rather, it demolishes the whole edifice of Islam that is firmly established on the principle of accountability.

The Quran says that on the day of Accountability everyone will be shown the exact effect of everything that they had thought, said or done in this life of probation, however they may have concealed or misinterpreted it in this life. Everything will be taken into account and the account shall convince even the persons themselves. It will be done openly and transparently.

It seems that the popular concept of intercession (patronage of criminals) originated during the era of despot kings when the Quranic value system was put aside and the principles of fairness, justice and accountability were ignored. Influential men in the royal courts interceded to protect criminals.

This concept may have gained credence from the Christian idea of atonement. According to this idea Jesus will intercede for all sinners among

his believers on the Day of Judgement. It was a strong argument used by Christians in an attempt to give the impression of superiority over other religions. Therefore, it may have inspired the Arab religion to contrive similar beliefs about Muhammad. They concocted a hadith claiming that on the Day of Judgement when God sentences the sinners to hell Muhammad will fall in prostration before God and will not raise his head until God forgives all sinners and sends them to heaven.

These falsehoods may have led to a perceived superiority by Muslims over Christians but at the same time proved fatal due to Islam's firm foundation on the principle of accountability. This hadith attributed to Mohammad regarding intercession is obviously false and in fact did great harm to muslims' morality. The Quran does not advocate such intercession as it states explicitly: "Beware of the day when no person can help another, no intercession will be accepted, no ransom can be paid, nor can anyone be helped." [Verse 2:48]. In other words this is a strict warning: be on your guard, do not think that special favours exempt you from the personal responsibility of each Self.

Some advocates of intercession conclude that God, in His wisdom, may grade his creatures and give superiority to one person over another. Then by His will and permission such a person may intercede or help. And as such Muhammad will intercede for Muslims by the will and permission of God. This conclusion is absolutely wrong as Muhammad cannot intercede on behalf of anyone.

Our thoughts and actions produce results simultaneously but often we cannot see or perceive them until they mature and become visible. There is a well-measured period for the maturity of each act to produce visible results. For some of our acts this period is so short that we can see the results in our lifetime but for the others it is so long that in order to see the results we must wait for the 'Final Day'. In order to understand it better, we can classify the phenomena of human activity as concrete realities and latent realities. The former we face in our lifetimes and the latter we face in the life yet to come – there is a built-in system of reward and punishment in the Divine Laws. God does not need help or advocacy of anyone whatsoever.

The Quran explains the process of reward and punishment figuratively so that human minds can grasp it easily. The 'Day of Judgement' presents a similar allegorical scenario like those we often see in judicial courts. For example, the criminal is brought to the court with witnesses. All are present and listen to the judgements. Similarly, the Quran says:

"You come back to us as individuals, just as We created you the first time ... We do not see with you the intercessors that you idolized or authorities that you set up as equals to Me and those who claimed that they will help you. All ties among you have been severed; the idols you set up have abandoned you." [Verse 6:94].

Traditional meanings of 'shafeeh' are misleading. The Quran does not use the word 'shafeeh' for Mohammad. It uses witness, (Arabic: *shahid)* for Muhammad [Verse 16:89]. On the day of accountability, those deluded with intercession will lament:

"The intercession of those whom We honoured will never help us." [Verse 74:48]. "…Warn them about the imminent day, when the hearts will be terrified and many will be remorseful. The transgressors will have no friend or an intercessor to speak on their behalf." [Verse 40:18].

And again, "Say: 'Shall I seek other than God as my sustainer when He is the sustainer of all things?' No Self benefits except from its own works and none bears the burden of another. Ultimately, you return to your God then He informs you of the truth regarding all your disputes." Verse 6:164.

With their roots in tradition and culture, beliefs in intercession are held by nations that have lost the will and energy to work hard. They have become idle and look for easy shortcuts to success. Could you imagine how easy it would be to get paradise through intercession? You are simply required to profess in the messengership of Mohammad and subscribe to a religion associated with him. When a person's prayer appears to be answered it is often assumed that intercession has worked, when in fact it was no more than a coincidence with events in accordance with God's ordinance.

In our world *shafeeh* means to stand with someone in order to help, advocate for, and support him. If this support is for a good cause, the *shafeeh* will be rewarded but if the support is for bad cause he will share part of the punishment along with the criminal. In reality, God does not need advocacy of anyone. To intercede for criminals or to favour someone undeservedly is against the teachings of the Quran. Therefore, this sort of belief in intercession is wrong. We cannot rely upon any power or person other than God to help us.[1070]

[1070] **Being a *shahfeeh*** clearly shows 'team mindset'. A group of intelligent people using planning and cooperation to their personal and community's advantage. They progress as a society as well as individuals and are constantly looking after each others' interests. They face and overcome the challenges of life and attract success and achieve harmony as their God-given right. Development through facing challenges: see verses 11:7; 11:114; 19:87; 94:5-8 also 3:185; 32:9. **Social welfare** and Citizen's income: see verse 21:112. Equity and equality: see verse 10:109. **Salvation without accountability.** In contrast, religions have a 'herd mentality', the blind following of each other without any critical thinking. Religious people are always waiting for a saviour to lead them out of their misery or hoping that an intercessor will show them pity or favour and they will be raised in status without fulfilling their commitments to themselves, their family or their society. This would be very much like being given a secure, easy and well paid job without having the qualifications, experience or the competence to perform it. The taint of cronyism, in fact. See verses and footnotes 2:177; 17:23- 39; 107:1-7. **In complete contradiction** to the Quran there is a Bukhari hadith that says 70,000 people will go to heaven *without* being held to account for their actions, and in the Bible it says that people are saved *not* by their good deeds but by the grace of God. Sahih-al-Bukhari 6059 and the Bible: Titus 3.5. Authentic Bukhari is the Sunni corpus of hadith literature. Hadith: 4:42; 68:37; 77:50.

THE TRADITIONS OF HADITH

Among the majority of people there are those who uphold profane hadith, and thus mislead many from the path of God without knowledge, and make themselves doomed to failure. These have incurred a shameful retribution. [Verse 31:6]

Besides believing in the Quran, the *traditions* also require Muslims to believe in other supplementary works called the 'hadith'. The word hadith in this context means narration. These hadith traditionally relate only to the deeds and utterances attributed to the messenger Muhammad; his speech, a report or an account of his deeds and words.

It is important to emphasise that the Quran uses this word 28 times without ever attributing it to the messenger, but warns against 'profane hadith' as noted in verse 31:6.

The hadith of the traditionalists are divided into two groups. The first is 'Hadith Qudsi'. These are considered as 'sacred hadith' - additional revelations from God, apart from the Quran. The second group is 'Hadith Sharif' or 'Noble Hadith' and are attributed to the messenger Muhammad himself. Few people realise, however, that the most binding precedents, rituals, rites, laws and customs were originated not by God Almighty, nor Muhammad but instead by imams such as Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Daud, Nasa'ai and Ibn Maja who assembled the numerous books of hadith literature.

There are also the small collection of Forty Hadith of Nawawi considered by hadith advocates to be of the greatest importance and the essential minimum education for a Sunni. The Bukhari and Muslim collections were compiled about two centuries after Muhammad and their authenticity 'proved' by the criterion of 'isnad' - the chain that details the reporters supporting a hadith. This method was based on the assumption that it was unthinkable for God-fearing men to lie about matters which they held sacred. The Shias call hadith by another name: 'Khabar', which means news. For them the authenticity of a hadith is guaranteed not by isnad, which begins with the companions of Muhammad (known as the sahaba), but its authority comes through Ali, the messenger Muhammad's son-in-law, and the Imams of Shiaism. The Shia collections which were made during the Buyid period are considerably larger than the Sunni ones and contain references to the Imams not found in the Sunni collections.

Following on from isnad, the chain of transmitters, the advocates of hadith of later times added another standard by which hadiths could be measured. This standard was a judgment of verisimilitude in the eyes of a growing community who were deeply religious but uneducated. As a result of this, there grew up a corpus of hadith which were clearly impossible historically and yet were repeatedly quoted and rarely questioned. They

had an 'authenticity of spirit' about them and therefore were not challenged. This consensus of silence was in fact an acceptance, even though the hadith could not be traced back to the messenger. To the informed mind this may appear as a major incongruity which reflects little credit on Islam's intellectual integrity. To question these hadith would call into question the faith of believers, yet this is exactly what the Quran does.

Scholars have often conceded that some hadiths have been invented in order to justify some legal opinion or school of thought. This is undoubtedly true and even the early compilers rejected large numbers of hadith as fabricated. The hadiths range from the ones which are patently, or pointlessly false, to the ones which blatantly contradict the Quran, despite clear statements in the Quran that nothing can abrogate God's word. There are also polemical hadiths which were invented as propaganda to support one or another party in dynastic and political struggles, and other hadiths which have nothing objectionable in their content, but which the messenger could not have uttered for historical reasons. A hadith may be true in the sense that it is a narrative wholly consistent with the message of Islam, but to ascribe it as a 'quotation' of the messenger Muhammad, simply to add authority is a gross blasphemy. The messenger may well have manifested all the values given in the Quran by act, thought, speech or gesture, but it is inconceivable that all the possibilities should be discoverable in the received canon of hadith.

Much research has been carried out on the hadiths, especially by orientalists, in an attempt to recover history from the hadiths. They almost unanimously find that one can recover some history of the second and the third century but almost nothing of the first. The logical conclusion of these findings is that the 'links' which spread over the eight generations succeeding the death of Muhammad were concocted. Therefore, the so-called 'science of isnad' – the touchstone of hadith authenticity – has some tremendous flaws in it.

How then can we go on giving credence to something that was not written down and yet which some 200 years after the fact, a man called Bukhari supposedly managed to trace back to its source (i.e. the messenger) by establishing all the links in a chain which cannot possibly have been genuinely reconstructed?

The other criteria to which Bukhari decided to subject his work sought to establish that the transmitters were honest persons in terms of their outward observance of Islam, and that each had a sound memory. This he did by apparently collecting the biography of each of the transmitters. How he managed to do this without written records, bridging a gap of about eight generations, and simultaneously establishing not only biographical

data but also a compelling analysis of the mental faculties of his subjects defies belief.

An example is called for: in a large number of hadiths Abu Huraira is taken as the last link in the chain of narration. He was not – even according to Bukhari's extraordinary method of compilation – assigned a good memory, however, even this unnecessary inconvenience was not a problem for Bukhari who found an explanation:

Bukhari (Hadith no. 4:841): Narrated Abu Huraira: I said, ''O God's Apostle! I hear many narrations from you but I forget them.'' He said, ''Spread your covering sheet.'' I spread my sheet and he moved both his hands as if scooping something and emptied it in the sheet and said, ''Wrap it.'' I wrapped it round my body, and since then I have never forgotten a single hadith.

A most ingenious explanation, indeed.

Another criterion of Bukhari is the overall agreement within the hadith as a whole. It means that any one hadith should comply with similar hadiths which give the same sort of story and that this should be seen as a basis for accepting it as authentic. In modern parlance, it means that the various stories should 'hang together', that one account should not conflict with another, and if there is no conflict, we should assume that the story is, therefore, true. The intelligent and attentive reader who takes the time to read a moderate number of even so-called 'sahih' or authentic hadiths on any subject will not need to go far before he finds a distinct failing on even this count.

The traditional clergy expends great energy trying to account for these inconsistencies and contradictions. Their answers to common-sense observations may involve various choices of words, yet the thrust can broadly be summarised thus: *in order to understand the hadith you have to be very learned. There seems to be contradictions in the hadith to you because you are not learned. They - the clergy - are learned. Therefore, they do not see these contradictions. When you are learned like them, you too will not see contradictions. Until you are as learned as they you cannot contend with them on this (or any) subject. The fact that you fail to perceive any of this only testifies to your own ignorance.*

Such is their convoluted logic. It should be noted that these are the *sahih* or authentic hadith. There are other grades of hadith which are viewed with varying degrees of suspicion even by those who accept the sahih versions. One can find many hadiths which not only contradict the Quran but also clearly do damage to the Messenger's good name.

Stoning for adultery or fornication. The Quranic law on this is absolutely clear. The Quran makes no distinction between adultery and fornication. The Arabic word for adultery or fornication is *zina*. In English law adultery is specifically 'sex between a man and a woman where one or both are married but not to each other.' In English law, sex outside

marriage where neither of the parties is married is not adultery. Also, in this law, if a married person has sex with an unmarried person, only the married person has committed adultery. The English law does, therefore, make the distinction between adultery and fornication, but Quranic law does not. The Quran actually makes this law very clear: the punishment for proven *zina* (sex outside marriage or between a man and a woman where either or both parties are unmarried) is 100 lashes. Also, four witnesses who can testify to the relationship are required before the case can be judged proven.

This does not mean that it must have been witnessed by four people at the same time, but rather four people must be able to testify that the accused has committed an act of sexual immorality, and in this case *zina*.

Also the Quran dictates that in order to avoid punishing the innocent, if a husband accuses his wife without witnesses, he is required to take an oath four times to confirm his accusation and the fifth oath to invoke God's condemnation if he is lying. But significantly, the woman too may take advantage of the same procedure and deny the claim to avoid any punishment. Furthermore, where the accuser has failed to produce four witnesses, he is to be punished with 80 lashes. In such a case, the courts cannot punish women but those who commit perjury face justice. The Quran's decrees are clearly just, yet we find the so-called 'Islamic states' stoning people to death on the strength of a ruling drawn from what the Bukhari hadith has to say, and not judging cases according to the Quranic law. See verse: 24:2-9.

The hadiths rule that the woman should be buried up to her neck and then killed by stoning her on her head. The man is to be buried up to the waist and then stoned. It is a barbaric practice and the media takes this opportunity to denigrate Islam when in fact the act is not at all Islamic. Sadly, Bukhari has a large number of hadiths to support this act and the ruling shows the messenger in a very poor light. Unfortunately, most people do not know what the Quran has to say on this matter. Here a straightforward case where the Quranic law is absolutely clear, yet the Quran is completely ignored and the hadith accepted unquestioningly.

Like many doctrines found in the hadith, the punishment of stoning to death for adultery has its origin in the Old Testament. This law has been copied by all six collectors of hadiths who stress their claims that the messenger practiced it. Large portions of the canon of hadith literature is derived not only from Biblical law (the Old and New Testaments) but also from the Mishnah and the Gemarah; the oral and written traditions of the Talmud. Here are the two hadith from Sahih Bukhari:

Bukhari (No. 8.816) : Umar said, ‘‘I am afraid that after a long time has passed, people may say, ‘We do not find the verse of rajam (stoning to death) in the Holy Book,’ and consequently they

may go astray by leaving an obligation that God has revealed. Lo! I confirm that the penalty of rajam be inflicted on him who commits illegal intercourse if he is already married and the crime is proved by witnesses or pregnancy or confession.'' Sufyan added, ''I have memorised this narration in this way''. Umar added ''Surely God's messenger carried out the penalty of Rajam, and so did we after him.''

Bukhari (No. 3.885): A Bedouin came to God's messenger and said, ''O God's Messenger! I ask you by God to judge my case according to God's Laws''. His opponent, who was more learned than he, said ''Yes, judge between us according to God's Laws, and allow me to speak.'' God's Messenger said, '' Speak.'' He said, ''my son was working as a labourer for this man and he committed illegal sexual intercourse with his wife. The people told me that it was obligatory that my son should be stoned to death, so in lieu of that I ransomed my son by paying one hundred sheep and a slave-girl. Then I asked the religious scholars about it. They informed me that my son must be lashed one hundred times, and be exiled for one year, and the wife of this (man) must be stoned to death.'' God's Messenger said, ''By Him in whose hands my soul is, I shall judge between you according to God' Laws. The slave-girl and the sheep are to be returned to you, your son is to receive a hundred lashes and be exiled for one year. You, Unais go to the wife of this man and if she confesses her guilt, stone her to death'' Unais went to the woman next morning and she confessed. God's Messenger ordered that she be stoned to death.

Both of these hadiths disregard the Quranic verses. The verses from the Quran show how in the eyes of true Islamic law the treatment given to women is absolute justice and equal for both for men and women.

Why are people not following the Quran? In fact, when one reads these hadiths, one gets the feeling that there must have been some kind of concerted plan at work. Dr. Abdul Wadud, in his book *'Conspiracies against the Quran'*, explores this question. He gives the following explanation: the Arabs defeated the Persians in war but the Persians were far more advanced in political intrigue than the Arabs. Therefore, they used their superiority in an attempt to corrupt Islam from the inside. The Deen-Islam cannot be corrupted because the Quran is there, and as long as people follow the Quran there is no problem. But the question was, how to make people deviate from the Quran? The answer: by creating another, additional body of writing and ascribing it to the messenger, and then persuading people that this is ordained by Muhammad as supplementary explanation to the Quran.

This approach has been most effective. In fact, we see that once the name of Muhammad is invoked people accept anything as the truth and follow it blindly, and the fact that it may be in total conflict with God's decree in the Quran seems to be of no consequence. As the saying goes; once in a while everyone gets knocked down by the truth; but most people get up, dust themselves and walk on as if nothing had ever happened.

At this stage it is also important to mention the well-known historian Abu Jafar Muhammad bin Jareer at-Tabari who died in 933 C.E. during a period very close to when the hadith were written and completed. Tabari wrote 30 volumes of Tareekh-e-Tafsir (historical commentary) on the Quran, based on the hadith. Later on he wrote a history of Islam in 13 volumes based on his tafsir derived from the same hadith. Therefore, his tafsir rests on

hadith, as does his history. The Quran, too, is seen through the window of these hadith. Thus, all his books supposedly derive their credentials from the Quran, even though they are not based on the Quran. They are based on the hadith – a spurious, later body of work.

Today, no-one dares challenge Tabari in any of his views, since that would amount to challenging the hadith which, in the minds of the simple Muslims, have been accepted as factual accounts of the messenger's utterances. Tabari's work has become one of the main reference works used by Muslims who use it without ever questioning its authenticity.

Here is an another important issue to show how the hadiths clearly contradict the Quran. This example from Sahih Bukhari (Book of Nikah) is the reocurring accusation that the messenger was a paedophile, as he supposedly married Aisha when she was six years old and consummated this marriage when she was nine years old. Some hadith also accuse him of sexual depravity because he had more than one wife.

None of this is true and the Quran clearly emphasises his exemplary character, while the fabricated hadiths sadly confirm these contemptible assertions.

Such fabricated narratives are difficult, if not impossible to defend and no intelligent person would stoop to do so. Hadith advocates however, rather than reject this profane hadith, do defend it. Even the celebrated medical doctor turned televangelist preacher, Dr. Zakir Naik, agrees with the hadith that Aisha was nine years old at the time of consummation, but he contends nine year old girls at that time were menstruating and mature enough to have sexual intercourse.[1071]

It is true that even younger girls have been known to become pregnant, however, these are exceptions, and to shamelessly say that a 6 year old child is able to consent to marriage and three years later is fit, both physically and mentally to bear children is a gross indecency, irrespective of culture or time. The idea that 9 year old girls are sexually prime is perverted and cannot be supported by anyone who believes in Quranic values. The Muslim population around the world is mainly illiterate and ignorant, so when someone of Dr. Naik's ilk speaks with apparent knowledge, he is readily believed. In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.

The Quran was revealed by God as a guidance to take people out of ignorance and to not keep people immersed in depravity. The real reason the traditionalists defend such hadith is that to reject them would mean to reject the very foundation on which their beliefs rests. This verse is explicit in describing the situation:

[1071] **Dr. Zakir Naik:** Aisha married at young age: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qf6mfM3_02U

When they are told, "Follow God's guidance as revealed in this book," they say, "We follow only what we found our parents doing." What if their parents are not aware of this and are not guided? The example of such people is that of a parrot who repeats what it hears without understanding. Deaf, dumb and blind; they do not comprehend. [Verse 2:170-171]

In the days when there were no birth records and people hardly knew the year they were born, who would know Aisha's date of birth 200 years after the event when the hadith were compiled? The most reasonable explanation is that Aisha was much older than it says in the spurious hadith. It is no secret that the hadith are contradictory and often wrong in even simple matters, and this is most likely the explanation. Muhammad, the messenger, would never have done anything that conflicted with the Quran, especially marrying a pre-pubescent child.

The Quran only condones marriage between physically and mentally mature and consenting adults. Muhammad would never have strayed from Quranic guidance and it must be remembered that while he did marry more than once, he was married to the same one woman for most of his life, and it is only in the latter years, for political alliances, that he married more than one woman.

These are only three of many well known hadiths quoted here, and there are volumes more. You only have to read a few in the collection and it becomes clear that the hadith are much like the stories in the Bible; a mixture of anecdotes, parables, myths and indecencies.

Much has been wrongly attributed to the messenger and by using the 'hadith' to add weight to their personal interpretations, and satisfy their own vain desires and lusts, the advocates of hadith have defiled Islam. By using Muhammad's name, the 'Muslims' have transformed his purpose and diverted the people into following many false traditions and customs, instead of studying and applying the teachings of the Quran. Had God wanted to give Muhammad's quotes any importance He would not have said don't linger around Muhammad waiting for a hadith. See verse 33:53.

In conclusion here is a hadith that demolishes all hadith attributed to the good messenger: "*Do not write down anything I say except the Quran. Whoever has written something other than the Quran let him destroy it."* Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Vol 1, page 171 & Sahih Muslim, Book 42, No. 7147.

A hadith that says don't write down hadith? Proof, if further proof is needed, that these hadith fabrications are as contradicting and confusing as they are unreliable.[1072]

[1072] **Follow Bukhari,** even if it means that you end up looking like a clown, says TV evangelist Dr. Zakir Naik as he equates not following Bukhari's hadith of wearing your trouser hem high with committing shirk, i.e. treachery. See video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=FCyMko6Zmik
Shaykh Hassan Farhan al Maliki: priority to the Quran or hadith? See also the following videos:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xhrIUVQNpQ&app
www.youtube.com/watch?v=-VKMb7r6WNA#t=17

WHY DO WE NEED ABSOLUTE LAWS AND PERMANENT VALUES?

Consider the treatment of humanity: for millennia the world's religious, atheist and secular leaders and governments have applied their collective genius to the riddle of statehood. The results have been corruption, secret sex societies, cultic obsession by the elite with child sex, secrecy, aggression, state sponsored homicide and genocide, war, famine, infanticide, slavery, control, exploitation, manipulation and abuse of the masses in a variety of ways so scary that it defies description.

The need for the Quranic order arises from the fact that in the absence of a universal way of life, mankind must remain divided into mutually hostile groups. Under such conditions, there can be no enduring peace, no permanent security for the individual and no prosperity and happiness in the world. The Quran, for this reason, constantly draws attention to the unity of mankind, although conflict cannot be eliminated immediately.

The urgent need for a political organisation which would embrace all humanity cannot be denied. The existing political systems only divide mankind into warring camps. Each group has devised a system that serves its own interests and gives support to its own ambitions. Each of the political ideologies is suited only to its authors, but fails to serve others. The supremacy of a single group, racial or cultural, is either implied or expressly affirmed in these ideologies. Nazism and Fascism defend the right of the stronger race to exploit the weaker one. Communism theoretically asserts the supremacy of the workers but practically places political power in the hands of the party elite. Democracy inculcates belief in the cultural superiority of the people of one state, and seeks to make them prosperous even at the expense of peoples of other countries.

The Quran alone offers the system for the equitable welfare of all individuals and communities. Human equality and human worth are its cornerstones. Its goal is the uplift and unification of all mankind. It counters all attempts to break up mankind into groups. It dismisses the physical differences among men as of no consequence and treats as important what is basic in them, and therefore, common to all men. This is why the Quran speaks of God as the *Rabb (Sustainer) of the universe.* (Verse 1:1), of the *message* as "as a mercy from Us towards the whole world." [Verse 21:107] and as a *reminder* for mankind. [Verses 12:104; 38:87].

We can briefly look at some popular political ideologies before describing the Deen-Islam as found in the Quran.

Capitalism: also called free market economy, or free enterprise economy, the economic system dominant in the Western world since the breakup of feudalism, in which most of the means of production are privately owned and production is guided and income distributed largely through the operation of markets. This type of economic system can lead to

excesses which leave the less able and those trapped in poverty in a perpetual state of hardship. This is because, despite regulation and laws, the bottom line is money. This can also lead to superficial growth and a temporary boom in the economy as seen in the west in the nineties. Irresponsible lending led to the collapse of some banks. Even countries such as Greece, Ireland and Spain faced hardship not seen for a long time. No doubt some people did benefit from this chaos, but most people suffered. The post boom era also saw the growth of legalised usury when companies loaned relatively small amounts of money (i.e. Pay Day Loans) to the poor for interest rates of around 4,000%. This is legalised economic oppression. Capitalism may encourage a free market economy but it is at the expense of those who can ill-afford it.

Communism: the political and economic doctrine that aims to replace private property and a profit-based economy with public ownership and communal control of at least the major means of production (e.g., mines, factories and crops) and the natural resources of a nation. Communism is thus a form of socialism, a higher and more advanced form, according to its advocates. Exactly how communism differs from socialism has long been a matter of debate, but the distinction rests largely on the communists' adherence to the revolutionary socialism of Karl Marx**.**

Democracy: this is now generally regarded as the best form of government. It developed chiefly in the west, but people in Asia and Africa also regard it as the last word in political wisdom. How far is the praise showered upon it justified? Democracy has been defined as the government of the people, by the people, for the people. It is mainly the second factor in this definition that calls for comment. It means that in a democratic state there is no distinction between the rulers and the ruled. The people are supposed to rule themselves. They cannot do so directly, so they elect their representatives. These representatives, in turn, select the ministers who actually run the government. The laws and policies of the state and the principal measures adopted by the government do indeed reflect the will of the people, not of the whole people but of the majority of them. This is how democracy is perceived, the reality is in fact different.

In a single sentence, democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for dinner. Yet, there is no doubt that this is the best system man has been able so far to evolve for himself. The basic concept on which it rests, namely, that nobody has a right to rule over another, is ideal. But the question is whether it has achieved, or is capable of achieving the aim it has laid before itself. The west has been the cradle of democracy, so we may ask what the thinkers here have to say about it.

One thinker, Rene Guenon, in his book *The Crisis of the Modern World* describes it. The relevant passage deserves to be quoted in full:

If the word 'democracy' is defined as the government of the people by themselves, it expresses an absolute impossibility and cannot even have a mere de facto existence in our time any more than in any other. It is contradictory to say that the same persons can be, at the same time, rulers and ruled, because, to use the Aristotelian phraseology, the same being cannot be `in act' and 'in potency' at the same time and in the same circle of relations. The relationship of the ruler and ruled necessitates the joint presence of two terms; there could be no ruled if there were not also rulers, even though those be illegitimate and have no other title to power than their own pretensions; but the great ability of those who are in control in the modern world lies in making the people believe that they are governing themselves, and the people are the more inclined to believe this as they are flattered by it and as they are in any case, incapable of sufficient reflection to see its impossibility. It was to create this illusion that 'universal suffrage' was invented. The law is supposed to be made by the opinion of the majority but what is overlooked is that this opinion is something that can very easily be guided and modified; it is always possible by means of suitable suggestions to arouse in it currents moving in this or that direction as desired.

Many writers have taken pains to show that the belief in democracy, sovereignty or the absolute and unrestricted right of law-making belongs to the people, has no basis in fact. It has been supposed that the law enacted by the majority vote of the representatives of the people embodies the unanimous decision of all the citizens of the state and that, therefore, it is based on justice. This assumption is the chief cause of the decline of democracy in the present day.

Yes, democracy may be the best political system devised by Man, but, in practice, it can lead to the worst excesses of power in the state. This was especially proven true when Adolf Hitler, a dictator, came into power, in Germany before the second world war. In 2003, the democratically elected Prime Minister of Britain Tony Blair, on the basis of a fabricated dossier, waged war to remove Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. This was despite overwhelming public opposition in the United Kingdom to such a war. Even in a democratic state the politician fears no restraints such as ultimate accountability to God. Democracy is based on two fundamental suppositions: the first is that sovereignty is vested in the people and the second is that the decisions arrived at by the majority are always right. However, the latter is neither logical nor true. The fact that a majority of people consent to an act which is wrong, does not make it any less wrong. Collective wisdom is as imperfect and fallible as individual wisdom.

Ad-Deen: (The Deen) is the Social Order or System, in the Quran: the Deen-Islam. A system of laws and values based on the Absolute Laws and Permanent Values given in the Quran. All people are encouraged to follow the example of Abraham and Jacob who were exemplary in applying the laws and principles of this Deen:

Who would forsake the creed of Abraham as an example, except the one who is intemperate with his own Self? We have given him high regard in this world and in the future he will be among the righteous. When the One who sustains him said, "Submit," he said, "I submit to the One who sustains the universe." Moreover, Abraham exhorted his children to do the same, and as did Jacob: "O my children, God has pointed out for you this Deen-Islam; the established order, so do

not die except as submitters to this Deen." Had you witnessed Jacob on his death bed; he said to his children, "Who will you serve after I die?". They said, "We will serve your God; the God of your fathers Abraham, Ismail and Isaac; the One God. To Him we are submitters." [Verses 2:130-133],

Deen-illah the system or the (social) system of God: As mentioned there are many systems but the only system acceptable to God is Deen-illah, the System of God: Deen-Islam, the harmonious order. The social system that God has defined is based on Permanent Values and only this is acceptable to God: Anyone who seeks to follow other than Deen-Islam as a way of life, will never be accepted by Him, and in the life yet to come he will be among the losers. [Verse 3.85].

God is the sovereign lawmaker, and anyone who harmonises with His laws will live in peace and security. For example, God's law is that fire burns. You can use it for light and heat but if you abuse it you will suffer. Similarly there are laws for moral guidance. Anyone who goes against these values will too suffer the consequences. The principles given in the Quran are minimum, the essence and foundation of a legal system. A large number of rules and regulations can be stifling and restrictive. "The more corrupt the state, the more numerous the laws", as Tacitus said. Laws founded on a few sound and basic principles are far better than hefty legal tomes micro-managing people like a nanny state or worse, like a police state.

Islamic government, God's system: a system of government that is in fact a 'benevolent authority', based on Islamic 'Deen'. Islamic government works only for the progress and welfare of Mankind. Only immutable, external laws, which are not man-made, can give us the standard for absolute accountability (to God). This is ensured when the Islamic government adheres to the Absolute Laws and Permanent Values enshrined in the Quran. The elected administration is free to make by-laws according to the needs of time and location, but these must remain within the Quranic principles, values and laws. It is the state's responsibility to establish an environment in which an individual can pursue these absolute values. The government is thus enabled to establish a principle of progress in society that is also a standard of measurement to assess the relative worth of different societies. [Verses 2:177; 103:1-3].

God's will or God's ordinance are laws determined by God. Absolute Laws that operate the universe and are being enforced, whether we are aware of them or not. God's law (His will) determines that every action will have a consequence. We are free to make a choice but once the choice is made we cannot control the outcome. The result is according to God's Laws of Requital.

We generally understand a law to be a rule or body of rules made by a government. But a law can also be a law of nature; for example, the laws that govern the physical world. These laws are stable and always work given certain conditions. That's why we can make an airplane fly, or a ship sail, because we know these laws always work. In the same way, there is

another law. This law, the Law of Requital, states that every action of man has consequences which he has to bear whether he likes it or not. More important than the external effect of the action is the action's effect on the personality of the perpetrator. All actions however do not modify personality. An action which has been performed inadvertently or carelessly has little influence on man's Self. But an action performed deliberately for a set purpose or with a high degree of ego-involvement, changes personality for better or worse. It strengthens or weakens the moral fibre. The Law of Requital is in its purest form in the moral sphere. A person may continuously commit offences without being aware of the gradual harm that he is doing to his own personality. The man who is morally sensitive can perceive this effect coming about and check himself, before irretrievable damage is done. See verse 1:5 and footnote.

For a political system to operate for the welfare and progress of all the people without bias, needs to be based on Permanent Values - the universal set of rules which hold true regardless of time or location. Any political party that wants to establish such a system must necessarily operate within the parameters given in the Quran. As the Quran, which in verse 42:38 advocates rule by consensus, a voting system to decide the party that will implement the Quranic laws, even a vote to elect the leader for the party is not only acceptable, but a requirement. The only condition for any political party to form a prospective government is that it should adhere to the Quran and Quran alone for its values, principles and absolute laws. This does not deny the freedom to make and apply any other laws within the stricture of the Quran.

It should be pointed out that the idea of a *khilafat* or an Islamic State is not in the Quran, neither is a sultanate or a republic. These are innovations and not referred to in the Quran. Muslim leaders after the messenger created their political structures based on the principles of Permanent Values and Absolute Laws; values, rights, obligations, justice and truth as defined in the Quran. Therefore, the ideal should be NOT an Islamic State but the *state* of *islam*, i.e. a *state of harmony:* peace and security.

A nation that bases its constitution on the Quran and a political party that bases its manifesto on Quranic values is still free to form other laws within its boundaries. Such an administration is a *Benevolent Authority* and reflects unchanging principles in and for changing times: permanence and change; Absolute Laws and Permanent Values from the Quran with other laws made and applied according to the changing times and needs of the community or nation. See verses and footnotes 3:159; 42:38.

PERMANENT VALUES

How often do we hear people say that Islam is not a religion but a way of life? Christianity too is a way of life, as is Sikhism, Hinduism and sheep farming. Using a cliché to describe Islam is woefully inadequate. All religions have rites, rituals, worship and commandments or tenets that forbid bad things such as stealing and telling lies and encourage other things such as charity, helping others and being kind to one another.

Religions are like chameleons that change with the environment, and despite the separation of church and state, religions, or at least the people who run them, are often in bed with politicians to ensure people's compliance through doctrines and dogmas that benefit the rich and powerful. Through time religions evolve and morph to fit in with the needs of the ruling elite and indeed the priest.

The Bible condemns homosexuality and at one time it was illegal in Britain, but now there are openly gay priests and it is frowned upon to consider gays and lesbians as sexual deviants. The caste system has been an integral part of Hinduism for centuries but now in India it is made illegal although still practised by the devout. The Bible forbids women to preach, but in modern Christianity women priests are commonly ordained.

There is no permanence in these values or rules. The satirical novella 'Animal Farm' by George Orwell depicts this excellently to show how rules change with the changing demands of those in power.

We know from the Quran that Islam is not a religion, but a holistic social system: the Deen-Islam. What then is the unique distinguishing factor that other social systems or indeed religions do not have?

While Deen-Islam may share some aspects with other social structures, the inimitable features of Deen-Islam lie in its exceptional set of Permanent Values that are underpinned by ultimate accountability to God: unchanging principles for changing times. A code of life for all people in all times.

It is the Permanent Values that guard us from inflicting damage to our moral Self. Living by these values produces measurable results that benefit the individual as well as the community. This is the mechanism that tells us something is harming our moral wellbeing. Permanent Values, like the laws of nature, are absolute. But we can only adopt these values by choice; there is no automated screening to prevent us from any distress that might follow should we make the wrong choice. Once a choice has been made, we have to live by the consequences; the law of requital ensures that.

The Quran clearly tells us that the human Self develops and advances according to its deeds, the positive action that raises the measure of human value by developing the Self, making it fit for this life and the life yet to come. This development can be made by *anyone* who aligns his or her

values with the Permanent Values found in the Quran, and the Quran alone, with ultimate accountability to the One God, and to God alone.[1073]

Unlike religion, where the process of salvation is liberation from sin and rescue from evil, the Quran confirms that salvation for those who follow this guidance is not the regaining of a state of bliss which was forfeited through the 'original sin', but a positive achievement; the acquisition of a new value. Each individual creates a new paradise by realising his or her potentialities. The reward of salvation is not a well-earned rest but a greater zeal for action and renewed outlook to an ambition, which is the life yet to come. To achieve salvation is to prove one's fitness for entering on a higher plane of existence in the next life.

Only a developed Self is truly free and attains this salvation. Salvation is the positive content of an individual's achievement. It is encapsulated in the sense of fulfilment, the feeling of realisation and the thrill of expansion. Man is endowed with a number of potentialities. By Self-discipline and conquering his ego a person develops his personality. By developing this he can reach his full stature and qualify for still higher stages that await him. The underlying message appears to be: most things still remain to be done; what a glorious future!

According to Christian belief everyone is born sinful. This doctrine of the Original Sin is an important Augustine doctrine within the Roman Catholic Church and means that people are born with a built-in urge to do bad things and to disobey God. The Quran negates this concept of the original sin and tells us that each person is responsible for their own crimes and no Self bears the wrongs of another. Each person is responsible for their own reckoning and each community is responsible for what they earn. The Quran declares that non-one can take your sins, you must pay for your own wrongdoings.[1074]

While looking at the Permanent Values it is important to also understand some basic concepts from the Quran which are shown below along with

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[1073] **The Quran** states unequivocally that anyone who does good will be rewarded and each individual creates a heaven or hell according to their own deeds. Peace and security in this life and the life yet to come, the Quran says, is a right of those who do good. They do not need pity, grace or intercession, they are already honoured by their deeds. [Verse 21:28].However, the Bible says that a person is saved not by works of righteousness but according to mercy [Titus 3:5] and that you are saved by grace and not of yourselves. [Ephesians 2:8]. This is in contrast with the Quran which tells us that each individual can raise the esteem of his or her Self by the measure of *their own* endeavour. We do the deed and the Self progresses or regresses accordingly. This shows that the aim and the focus of a religion, such as Christianity, not only contradicts itself, but different religions are also in conflict with each other. To accept one religion is to be in conflict with all others. See verses and footnotes 71:28, and 2:183; 11:52; 57:10; 63:11; 73:20; 75:40.

[1074] **Original Sin:** See verses and footnotes . 2:134; 6:52 ; 11:35. 29:12; 35:18.

the list of Permanent Values. This is not an exhaustive listing so it is important to read the Quran: it not only gives the complete Absolute Laws and all the Permanent Values, it also puts them into context of developing the Self, which should really be the goal of each individual and all societies.

- **God:** The concept of God as revealed in the Quran is an external objective standard for us to follow as far as it relates to the development of the human Self. *"Do not be like those who forgot God, so He made them forget themselves…"* [Verses 59:19; 112:1-4].
- **Equality as a human being** (unity in humanity): At birth we are equal and it is how we respond to the world around us that changes our Self. The Quran declares: *"All of the mankind used to be one community…"* [Verse 2:213].
- **Respect as a human being:** Every human being possesses a Self which has the attribute of free will. This entitles every human being to equal respect, so that there can be no discrimination due to reasons of family, tribe, race, community, nationality, religion, gender, colour, language, culture, tradition: *"We have honoured the children of Adam …"* [Verse 17:70].
- **Freedom:** Since every human being is born free, then he or she should remain free. According to the Quran, freedom means that no-one can extort obedience from another human being. Only the Quranic Values should be followed as it is only by operating within the confines of these Values that the Self can develop. [Verses 2:256; 4:137; 9:115; 10:99; 11:118; 13:40; 18:29; 109:1-6].
- **Freedom to choose** (no compulsion): Responsibility for the act of a human being is determined by his own volition and intent. It is our choices in life which define us. The Quran invites us to use the power of our intellect and reasoning to acquire evidence to then make informed decisions. *'When reminded of their Sustainer's guidance, they never react to it as if they are deaf and blind.."* [Verse 25:73].
- **Righteousness as a criterion:** The level of development of the self and individual conduct should be the criterion for higher responsibility within a society. The Quran declares: *"O people, We created you from the same male and female and rendered you distinct peoples and cultures, that you may recognise one another, but the best among you in the sight of God is the most righteous. God is all-knowing and aware of all things."* [Verse 49:13].
- **Tolerance:** Freedom to choose means that we need to be tolerant and accept the choices made by others in their lives. The Quran

asks us to understand this at a fundamental level i.e. by being in possession of a Self with freedom to choose, we need to recognise this state exists in others and accept it. [Verses 17:53; 29:46; 42:37; 16:125; 73:10; 6:108; 109:1-6; 18:29; 25:63; 7:199; 3:90; 4:137; 41:34; 60:8].

- **Existence of the human Self:** We all have a strong sense of identity and are aware of our existence. We have self-consciousness and the ability to make decisions. Our inner attributes of emotions, thinking, memory etc. help us to live our lives and in the process we gain experiences which help to develop our Self-concept [Verse 39:41].
- **Responsibility cannot be shared at the level of the Self:** At an individual level each one of us is a complete unit therefore none can share our responsibility at this level. The Quran asks us to follow this value in our interactions as well [Verse 53:38].
- **Free will:** The use of this value is up to us as individuals to use by exercising our freedom to choose. However our choices have consequences and we are accountable for these. The Quran tells us that this is your world and you can live your life as you wish. *"….do what you will: verily He sees what you do."* [Verse 41:40].
- **Warning/admonition:** We need to warn each other about the consequences of what we think, say and do in our lives. The Quran asks us to think of the consequences of every action we take in our lives both in the short term and the long term. The Quran calls its message a warning to mankind - to be accepted or rejected and then to live with the consequences of those choices: *"To warn those who are alive and to expose those who reject this guidance."* [Verse 36:70]. See also Verses 6:70, 7:51. The Quran asks us to keep reminding each other about the purpose of life [Verses 103:1-3].
- **Justice:** When dispensing justice, no distinction is allowed between friend and foe, us and them: "*Do not be provoked by your conflicts with some people into committing injustice. You shall be completely equitable because it safeguards your righteousness. You shall follow God's guidance. God is fully aware of everything you do." [Verse 5:8].* See also verses 2:283; 4:135; 4:105; 4:135]. The changing of Allah's laws is declared to be injustice by the Quran [Verse 50:29].
- **Good deeds replace the effects of bad deeds:** The Quran declares: "*…The good works rescind the evil works. This is a reminder for those who take heed. …'* [Verse 11:114] *'Therefore, prevent their*

evil works with integrity and justice; We are fully aware of their claims." [Verse 23:96].

- **What is good for mankind remains on earth***: "...while that which benefits the people prospers the earth ..."* [Verse 13:17].
- **Knowledge:** The Quran has referred to both perceptual and conceptual knowledge and encourages mankind to explore both the visible and the invisible worlds to understand the truth and the purpose behind human creation. *"He teaches man what he never knew.."* [Verse 96:5] *'He gave Adam the ability to distinguish all things'.* [Verse 2:31].
- **Science:** The Quran directs us to make efforts to discover both the visible and the unseen worlds and bring them into use for the good of mankind at large: *"...He committed in your service everything in the heavens and the earth; all are bounties from Him. These are signs for people who reflect."* [Verse 45:13].
- **Aesthetic sense**: As human beings we have an aesthetic sense, an appreciation for beauty. The Quran acknowledges and respects this and considers it as a necessary element in the growth and development of human personality*: "Say: "Who prohibited the beautiful things God has created for His creatures and the good provisions?..."* [Verse 7:32]. However, the pursuit of the aesthetic sense should be within the confines of the Permanent Values.
- **History as a model:** The Quran asks mankind to study history and the rise and fall of civilisations with a view to learning lessons. This helps us to study the Permanent Values and see that violations of these values leads to wars and conflicts and leads to a waste of valuable human time. *"Have they not travelled the earth and noted the consequences for those who preceded you? They used to be greater in number, greater in power and possessed a greater legacy on earth than you. Yet, all their achievements did not help them in the least."* [Verse 40:82, 10:39].
- **Subsistence:** Basic necessities[1075] for all human beings must be met and an environment should be created for the development of the human Self. Meeting the physical needs of the human body is essential before intellectual reasoning and creative activity can be brought into play. This is the reason why the Quran declares that the aim is to establish an economic system (social welfare) in which there is no accumulation of wealth: *"They also ask you what*

[1075] **Basic necessities** will include food, shelter, security, medical treatment, education, job, freedom of expression, freedom to practice religion, etc.

they should give in expenditure for the welfare of society, say, "Be clement and give the excess part of your disposable income or goods." God thus clarifies this guidance for you, that you may reflect." [Verse 2:219].

- **Reward is for the work and not the capital:** This value defines the economic system proposed by the Quran. The capital must remain in continuous flow and must not be accumulated. Reward for work must meet the necessities of life. [Verses 6:141; 53:39; 59:7].
- **Patience and perseverance:** Since the Self takes time to develop, as it has to gain knowledge and overcome the challenges of life, it therefore needs time to build up its inner conviction and strength. It needs guidance as an external criterion of reference to signpost its progress towards its development: *"...Follow what is revealed to you and be patient until God issues His judgment; He is the best of evaluators.."* [Verse 10:109]. An analogy of this is that the Self is like a seed which needs to be nurtured to grow to its full potential.
- **No restriction on human movement:** The world belongs to each and every one of us and should be available for the use by anyone within the remit of the Permanent Values. No human being owns this world – the fact that with death we leave it all behind proves this. The world is 'loaned' to human beings to use it for a short time only: we are its custodians - not owners. The Quran declares: "*(God) The One who made the earth habitable for you and the sky a structure. He sends down from the sky water, to produce all kinds of fruits for your sustenance. You shall not accept any authority to equal or rival God, now that you know."* [Verses 2:22, 29:56, 39:10]
- **Relationships**: Human beings need the presence of other human beings within individual relationships and at the level of community in order to function, grow and develop the Self. All people used to be one community, but they fragmented. [Verse 10:19]. This is why hermitism and monasticism is forbidden. [Verse 57:27].
- **Marriage:** This is primarily a contract between two equal individuals (male and female) to live their lives within the confines of the Permanent Values [Verse 2:221]. Chastity is one of the permanent values within this context and the Quran demands observance from both men and women [Verse 24:30-31]. Although there is no encouragement of polygamy, men are permitted to marry more than one woman, but not to the

detriment of a previous relationship. There are specific conditions for all relationships between men and women.

- **Freedom from fear:** For free will to operate effectively, there has to be freedom from fear as this constrains it. The Quran declares that living within the Permanent Values will eliminate all fears [Verse 2:38].
- **Freedom from grief:** Grief is caused by events affecting human beings within a society. Most events causing grief can be linked directly or indirectly to human actions e.g. economy, wars, oppression, exploitation, slavery etc. The Quran recognises this and refers to it in many verses [Verses 2:38, 3:138; 15:77].
- **Death:** This is a deadline to remind us that we have a finite time to live in this life and our conduct here in this world will define the status of our next life after death. When we consider the event of death at the level of the Self, the Quran declares: *"...Every Self will taste death, then to Us you will be ultimately returned."* [Verse 29:57].
- **Hereafter:** The life of the 'emerged' human Self continues beyond death and into the life yet to come. The 'emerged' human Self is one that has reached a minimum threshold according to the Quran, when on balance the effects of the good deeds exceed those of the deeds that have negative effects*: "...O you who believe, you shall uphold your duty to God and let every Self examine what it has sent ahead for tomorrow...*" [Verse 59:18]. *'...Every Self will find out what caused it to advance and what caused it to regress*." [Verse 82:5].
- **Enjoin what is just and forbid what is wrong:** The Quran has repeatedly directed us to keep doing this to remind people about their conduct. This is part of righteousness which *mu'mineen* are expected to display through their conduct. See for example Verse [49:15] and [Verses 3:104; 3:110; 3:114; 31:17].
- **Do Not Say That Which You Don't Do:** Deeds should be commensurate words: *"O you who believe, why do you say what you do not do? Most abominable in the sight of God is that you say what you do not do."* [Verse 61:2-3].

And finally...

Accountability (the Law of Requital): Human beings possess free will, emotions, and the ability to critically think - even to think about thinking, and memory. Our thinking, decisions and actions leave an impact on our

Self i.e. it changes our personality and the way we think and act. The Quran declares that every cause has an effect in the everyday life of human beings. This is called the Law of Requital that does not leave any of our deeds unaccountable and none of us is dealt with unjustly [Verses 3:162; 4:95; 6:50; 32:18; 45:21; 47:14]. The purpose of every human being, ***the very meaning of life,*** is to turn our good deeds to the development of our Self and make it fit for the life ahead; both in this world and in the state of being yet to come. Only progressive action enriches the Self and only the developed Self can move forward and enjoy a better life.

The Quran, the only book to contain the Permanent Values, says that every action produces a result and those who give up the good for the great - a lower value for a higher value - are fully recompensed, and no one suffers injustice. Those who, after receiving the profound guidance, understand this will experience that the measure and esteem of their Self increases with the goodness of their actions, and this makes them fit for the life yet to come. [1076]

What worth is a deed if its true value is not fully realised?

Every individual can, through his or her own free will, realise the measure of his or her endeavour. This is what makes Deen-Islam better over and above any other social system, or indeed any religion.

[1076] **The Quran** contains optimum standards of good conduct: the Permanent Values and Absolute Laws. Unchanging principles for changing times. According to traditionalists a Muslim's 'faith' is not complete without pilgrimage, fasting and other such rituals. But the Quran says this is the same Deen as given to Abraham, Moses and Jesus [Verse 42:13]. The messenger also said that this guidance (the Quran) is no different to what previous messengers brought [Verse 46:9]. If a person cannot be a Muslim without believing in and performing these rituals, how then could the earlier messengers and all the people have been muslims who did not perform these rituals?

EAT NOW OR FEAST LATER?

As long as the general population is passive, apathetic, diverted to consumerism or hatred of the vulnerable, then the powerful can do as they please, and those who survive will be left to contemplate the outcome.
Noam Chomsky

The unexamined life is not worth living.
Socrates

Given the option to eat now or feast later, most people will probably choose to eat now. Will people accept this guidance to 'tighten their belts' for a disciplined life now to secure a much better future later? Not necessarily.

Clearly the majority of people are unlikely to be swayed by the Quran, no matter how convincing the argument or how clear the proof may be. It's not in the nature of human beings to easily accept good advice, or any advice for that matter, especially if it is about a future they cannot envisage. They are largely unconcerned with anything unless motivated by pain or hunger. This is why most people are satisfied with food, shelter and the diversions of entertainment; they enjoy creature comforts and are unlikely to risk anything that disturbs this.

The majority go with the flow: they want to do what they see their friends, family and neighbours do. This is why religions are so successful with the masses. The traditions and the rituals give the feel of belonging and the security of 'kinship' it brings. They passionately defend their faith, even a regressive one, with violence if necessary. Truth is harder to accept. As Voltaire said "It's difficult to free fools from the chains they revere."

Medical experts agree that there are no health benefits in smoking tobacco, either to the smoker or to those around them. Warnings with graphic pictures appear on cigarette packets, quit-smoking schemes are promoted in clinics around the country, yet millions still smoke, heedless of the long term harm they do to themselves, their family, friends work colleagues and even people they don't know. The attraction to the pleasure of smoking is so great, that no matter how much evidence is provided, people continue to smoke. The smokers even justify their habit as a great benefit to society in the taxes that they pay and the jobs they help maintain.

People are generally sedentary and unwilling to be motivated by what will happen tomorrow, let alone the distant future. This is why the intelligent who understand this guidance have a duty to take action and promote the Permanent Values in the Quran for the benefit and welfare of society as a whole, if only ultimately to protect their own future.

As mentioned in verse 8:25, when good people take no action to stop bad things from happening, not only will the corrupt and the criminals suffer, but society as a whole will be affected. We all have freedom to choose to

believe or not. However, the effects of not implementing a *complete* working social system can be witnessed around us. The majority of people around the world are living in turmoil and fear. They are, for all to witness, already in hell. Unless the *root causes* of the problems are eradicated no amount of tinkering can resolve the dilemma mankind now faces.

People have choices. While people are free to make a choice, once the choice is made they are not free from the consequences of that choice. That is God's Law of Requital - whether you believe in it or not.

The Quran is good news for those who want to reform society for the welfare and progress of mankind. It is also a warning to the corrupt and the criminals in society. Furthermore, people who ignore guidance in the Quran, and do nothing to stop bad things from happening, will also continue to suffer from the effects of corruption and exploitation, not only on a global level, but also the fear and turmoil closer to home, their community and their family.

It is not enough for people to want change. People must want *to* change. As it clearly says in the Quran: In accordance with God's ordinance the circumstances of any people does not change unless they make changes in their own Self. [Verse 8:53].

So in answer to the question: will people accept this guidance? The majority of people may not agree with the laws and values given in the Quran. There are also people who don't agree with the state laws. Those who take action to show their disagreement often end up in prison. Similarly, the Quran offers guidance and people are free to accept or reject it, and they too will have to face the consequences of their decision.

However, taking everything into consideration, it is the intelligent person who may well want to know something beyond the question: what's for lunch?

THE QURAN : GOD'S MESSAGE TO MANKIND

The Quran is a message of guidance. The purpose of Islam is to develop the Self; realise its full potential though its own endeavour. This is why there are challenges in life. If you have overcome no obstacles, then what have you achieved?
[See verses 94:5-6]

The guardians will ask, "Did you not receive messengers who delivered to you clear guidance?" They will reply, "Yes we did."

Most assuredly, We will give victory to Our messengers and to those who believe in this guidance, both in this world and on the day when you witness your accountability. On that day, the apologies of the ones who rejected this guidance will be of no benefit. The disbelievers have incurred condemnation, they have incurred a terrible ending.
[Verses 40:50-52]

If anyone thinks that God cannot sustain him in this life and in the life yet to come, let him turn completely to his Creator by following this guidance and sever his dependence on anyone else for such direction. He will then see that this plan eliminates anything that troubles him. We have thus revealed clear guidance in here, then anyone who ignites his own initiative is guided according to God's ordinance.
[Verses 22:15-16]

FURTHER READING

Islam: A Challenge To Religion - G. A. Parwez
Conspiracies Against The Quran - S. A. Wadud
The Power of Focus - Canfield/Hansen/Hewitt
Outwitting The Devil - Napoleon Hill
The Prince - Niccolò Machiavelli
Basic Income - Guy Standing
The Mind of God - Paul Davis

From Greece To Glasgow: The Fatwa Trail

Quranic Permanent Values - G. A. Parwez
Translated by Paigham Mustafa

Zipedia Islam - Edited & Compiled by Paigham Mustafa

AN INTRODUCTION TO
RADICAL ISLAM
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A New Book by Paigham Mustafa
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PAIGHAM MUSTAFA
has also written for the Sunday Herald and the National
and was interviewed on BBC Radio programmes.

"His is the kind of liberal, moderate Muslim voice politicians and faith leaders want to hear more of..."
The Sunday Times Scotland - News review

ALSO VISIT
www.signat.co.uk
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Wisdom without power is preaching.
Power without wisdom is barbarism.

The Quran is a message of guidance specifically for individuals; to build communities and societies in order to ultimately develop their own Self and realise their full potential and raise the measure of their endeavour. But there are hurdles, the challenges of life. To achieve their goal, those who believe in this guidance have a duty to oppose all that is evil. But to create a movement to do this is foolish and unnecessary. It could be infiltrated, bought off and diverted all too easily. Why play by the enemy's rules? Opposition, said Anthony Hutton, should be individual in character. It should take a thousand or a million forms until it becomes a tsunami that overwhelms the enemy; the unjust and oppressive rulers and operators of the modern world.

Deliver the Message.
IF NOT YOU, THEN WHO?

The work you have been entrusted with is not yours
to finish, but neither are you free to take no part in it.

Alhamdulillahi rabbilalamin
Praise be to God, Sustainer of the Universe.